

# Disability Now



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## It's Catch-22 for local authorities

"Must local councils break one law to stay within another?"

The question posed by Alf Morris MP, a former minister for the disabled, emerged at a meeting of MPs and representatives from local authorities, trade unions and voluntary bodies held at the House of Commons on 21 January.

The meeting was suggested by The Spastics Society and attended by three of its officers headed by John Cox, the director. Alf Morris was in the chair.

The aim was to see how well the legal requirements of the Chronically Sick and Disabled Persons Act were being met by local authorities.

In fact, local authorities now find themselves in a *Catch 22* situation. The cuts in rate support grant mean they haven't the money to meet the requirements, yet if they raise money through the rates they will fall foul of the Rates Act (rate capping).

It was agreed that a statement setting out this dilemma and expressing concern about its effects on services to disadvantaged people should be drawn up by Alf Morris, approved by those at the meeting, and sent to Patrick Jenkin, MP, Environment Secretary.

The government appears to be going two ways. The 1979 Conservative Party Manifesto stated that "the Government's five tasks are to support family life by concentrating welfare services on the effective support of the old, the sick, the disabled and those in real need."

Yet in a recent letter to Alf Morris about local authority spending, Patrick Jenkin said, "I do regret the effect the cuts can have on expenditure to assist the disabled but the overall expenditure position is such that the restraint needs to bite across the board."

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The DISPART launchers — (from left) Dr David Owen, Mrs Nicki Friswell and Tim Rice.

## DISPART '85 is launched!

"Why should young people who are able-bodied contribute to the community and those who are physically handicapped not have the opportunity to make their input as citizens to an overall youth effort?" asked Dr David Owen, the SDP leader, at the launch of Disabled Participation '85 (DISPART) on 31 January.

"That seems to me what you are trying to do in this project and I think it is thoroughly worthwhile and extremely important," he said.

DISPART is a group of 5 charities — ASBAH, The Muscular Dystrophy Group, PHAB, The Spinal Injuries Association and The Spastics Society — who have joined forces to give any disabled people aged 16-25 the chance to participate in the UN International Youth Year.

Dr Owen praised their efforts to involve young disabled

people in projects at home and abroad.

To disabled people he said, "It is both playing a full part in terms of contributing and helping others and it is also enabling you to get satisfaction and enjoyment from some of the activities being undertaken by young people right across the country."

The theme of integration was picked up by Nicki Friswell, chair of PHAB's National IYY working party and a member of PHAB's management council.

She saw DISPART as an opportunity for disabled people to draw able-bodied organisations and young people together to look at ways of increasing integration, taking responsibility for running activities, and their own lives. She welcomed the support of organisations like the British Youth Council and the National Association of Youth

Clubs, and of BP.

Among guests at the launch were Peter Brooke, MP, Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State at the DES, who has responsibility for youth affairs and higher education.

The meeting was chaired by Tim Rice, chairman of The Stars Organisation for Spastics. For information about DISPART activities, phone 01-388 5729.

## 40pc cut in building funds

The Department of Health has cut the amount local authorities can borrow to provide buildings and facilities for elderly and disabled people by 40 per cent.

The reduction, which takes effect in April, means that social services capital allocation will go down from £166 million to £70 million.

The Department of Health, which informed councils of the cut by letter on 17 January, has said that the economies have been introduced because not all authorities have used their powers to borrow the money.

Neil Kay, director of social services for Sheffield, says that the cut will badly set back their building and improvement schemes for elderly and disabled people.

"We've been told that Sheffield will be cut from £1.5 million to £658,000," he says.

"For disabled people, the

most disturbing thing is that we have a policy of adapting their houses, providing downstairs toilets, stairlifts and ramps. If we don't get a reversal of this decision it will mean a severe cut in this work."

Mr Kay, who is also a junior vice-president of the Association of Directors of Social Services, is doubtful that the scale of the cut reflects the amount of the allocation not used by authorities.

The Association of Metropolitan Authorities is gathering information on the change in capital allocation to prove that the cut is excessive.

"Although it is certainly true that some authorities haven't spent what they were allocated," says Peter Westland, social services under-secretary at the AMA, "our preliminary investigations suggest that this is nowhere near the size of the cut made."

## SDP differences?

"The SDP does not have a specific policy on disability", admitted Lord Kilmarnock, SDP spokesman on disability in the House of Lords.

This stems not from apathy or disinterest, but from the desire for a policy built out of thorough consultation and debate.

"The SDP does not intend to blindly accept existing dogmas", he said.

Lord Kilmarnock was speaking at an enthusiastic fringe meeting of the SDP's Health and Welfare Association in Birmingham on 26 January, at which David Hanson, The Spastics Society's lobbyist, and Dr Eileen Fry, the employment officer, were guest speakers.

The SDP is to set up a Disability Working Party which will invite evidence from organisations such as the Society, said Lord Kilmarnock.

A different view of why the party has no policy on disability came from Dr David Owen, its leader, after the DISPART launch.

"We can't have policy documents on every aspect of society," he said.

Continued on page 4

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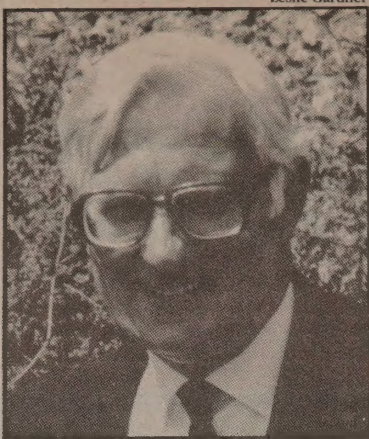
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## DIRECTOR OF EDUCATION

### "The Society has got to change"

Freddie Green talks to Mary Wilkinson about his new plans for the Education Division



Leslie Gardner

*Freddie Green has been head of 2 schools for physically disabled children, the first special education advisor to the Hampshire LEA and, from 1970, an HMI at the DES with national responsibility for special education. He helped to draft the 1981 Education Act. He joined the Society last September.*

attempting to meet a very wide age and ability range then they get the worst of both worlds.

One of the ways forward is to consider some form of rationalisation – to concentrate on one level of curriculum, impose age limits, or group children with additional disabilities, as we do with deaf children at Meldreth Manor.

I think the other important thing is the recognition on the part of parents and, indeed, professionals, that links with parents and home should be kept as strong as possible; that you only go for a boarding education at the end of your options and only then if you can do it on a regional, 5-day basis.

**MW:** Was your remit to change policy or did you decide this was necessary once you had seen the existing situation?

**FG:** I believe the Society recognised the need for a fundamental consideration of education and that was why I was asked to do something about it. If the children are changing and the climate of provision is changing, then the Society has got to change.

**MW:** If local authorities are restricted in the money they have to spend, where will we get our children from?

**FG:** I believe that the 1981 Education Act is at the moment a fairly sickly infant. It has been starved of resources. But local authorities and central government are at last beginning to realise that there are resource implications in the implementation of the legislation. The Education Act was about meeting children's needs. And whether you have the resources or not, that doesn't remove the needs.

I think the salvation of the Act will be the parents. For the first time parents have very clearly stated rights and what I think we have to do is to help them to become true partners.

**MW:** How can the Society do that?

**FG:** I want to provide a much more secure information and advisory service for parents, a facility for cooperation between professionals and parents. What we should be seeking to ensure is that we get the provision that is appropriate to the child's needs, whether that's in mainstream or special schools.

**MW:** Should we go further than advising and informing parents?

**FG:** Parents are entitled to produce evidence, and they may well turn to our doctors, social workers or educational psychologists for professional advice. We can assist them with their case on appeal, for example, as we have done already.

**MW:** So an information and

advisory service is one of your objectives?

**FG:** Yes. We could provide a national/regional service.

This is an area for cooperation with other voluntary bodies, and indeed negotiations are currently going on with the Voluntary Council for Handicapped Children.

In an ideal world we might establish something on the lines of a drop in centre like the citizens advice bureau. Or we might tie in with a local parents' self-help group.

**MW:** What other immediate objectives have you?

**FG:** With all these changes, staff training will be essential. I see a very positive role for Castle Priory College, not only to continue the courses it has organised traditionally for a range of disciplines, but also to develop in-service training programmes beyond the educational division. There are also possibilities for developing Castle Priory with its prime riverside site. To do all this would mean fairly massive capital expenditure – for a new residential block and the upgrading of existing facilities.

**MW:** What about the under-5s?

**FG:** An important activity for the future is the provision of what I call outreach services. For example, for the under-5s I would like to see a Portage-type service as a complement to existing mother and baby units.

Portage is a scheme which originated in Wisconsin. You involve the parent as the main teaching agency under the supervision and instruction of a professional. The Portage worker goes in once a week and decides with the mother what the objectives are for that week. Since objectives can be carefully planned in small steps, there is a high success rate. Also, this type of intervention comes at a time when families are feeling rather helpless and it offers the parents something useful to do.

There is now a National Portage Association in this country and over a 100 schemes are operating.

Although the Society has had minimal input so far, I hope it will play a more important role in the development of the project either by training Portage workers or helping to provide the service. It's all really waiting on the appointment of an educational development officer for the under-5s.

**MW:** What about the other end of the educational spectrum, the over-19s?

**FG:** I think we've got to consider the role of education not only whilst children are in school or college but what happens beyond 19. I hope to have another development post which will look at the whole question of what comes next.

I would like to see a much more secure education in its broadest sense in some of our day and residential facilities. That will involve cooperation with John Belcher.

**MW:** Parents from Rutland House School writing in last month's *Disability Now* thought that the Society was less interested in severely handicapped children and that there is a void for the over-16s. What would your answer be?

**FG:** The Society's very future lies with the education of the severely handicapped and it has a role to play in providing appropriate educational services of different kinds throughout the young person's life. We are very clear about that.

**MW:** Rutland House parents also commented on what seemed to be a constant battle between the

*Continued on page 4*

## Letters to the Editor

Disability Now 12 Park Crescent London W1N 4EQ

### A good balance

Some years ago, before I was elected to The Spastics Society's Executive Council, I can remember thinking that its members seemed to have been there, almost without change, since the beginning.

Once I had joined the Council, it did not take me very long to discover that I had been wrong. So it was something of a shock to hear the same thoughts being echoed at the AGM in November.

Every year, each local group is sent details of all candidates standing for election to the Council. If one puts together the information from these details (see below), quite a number of facts appear.

Out of the 15 members, 11

have been elected in the last 6 years. That is to say, they have served for 2 terms, or less.

While there are 4 members who are aged 60 or more, another 4 are aged 45 or less. We have 3 members still in their 30s.

There is a wide variety of occupations giving a fairly broad spectrum of viewpoints.

While I used to think that the Executive Council was dominated by parents of cp people, that is no longer the case – if it ever was. At the moment it is almost evenly divided into 3 groups. There are 6 parents of handicapped people; 5 of us have cerebral palsy; and there are 4 who have come in through interest alone.

That, I suggest, is a fairly good balance.

**Valerie Lang**

Flat 14  
1/14 Wynyatt Street,  
London EC1

### Executive Council Members (as at January 1985)

Name	Age	Occupation	Parent of CP person	CP	1st elected	Years served
Joyce Smith (Chairman) Salisbury	65	Justice of the Peace, housewife	No	No	1971	13
Derek Ashcroft (Vice Chairman) Brighton, Hove & Dist.	60	Schoolmaster	Yes	No	1974	10
John Byworth North London	35	Project engineer	No	No	1982	2
Dorothy Cottle Cardiff & Dist.	58	Housewife	Yes	No	1983	1
Ken Coulbeck Humberside	59	Maintenance engineer	Yes	No	1981	3
Ron Firman Nottingham	55	Academic	No	Yes	1978	6
Bill Hargreaves Brent (London)	65	Retired from Society staff	No	Yes	1983	1
Bill Huddleston Cleveland	55	Director	Yes	No	1978	6
Sharon Hughes Bolton & Dist.	32	Voluntary teacher	No	Yes	1983	1
Valerie Lang North London	45	H.E.O., Civil Aviation Authority	No	Yes	1979	5
Eileen Milnes East Region	54	Housewife	Yes	No	1977	7
Douglas Shapland London	55	Director of Social Services	No	No	1982	2
Iowerth Thomas (Vice Chairman) Urmston & Dist.	62	Civil engineer	Yes	No	1970	14
Adrian Wright Bristol & Dist.	58	Solicitor	No	Yes	1982	2
Tim Yeo Ipswich & E Suffolk	39	Member of Parliament	No	No	1984	—

### Mismanagement in local groups

In an article in the *Reader's Digest* (November), Mr Tim Yeo cites some examples of the inefficiencies and gross mismanagement which exist in many charities, thus defeating their purpose.

Of course he does not exonerate The Spastics Society, but rather shows how prudent management can renew a society and help it to build for its future.

How I wish he would press the same introspection onto many of our local groups.

It is no wonder, as the Director of Regions pointed out at the AGM, that young people are reluctant to come forward to help when all they see is mismanagement, gross inefficiency and a mismatch of objectives and realities in group situations. (I hasten to add that this is not the case – is it? – with all our groups.) Emotional motivation is not enough.

I look forward to her "direction" in re-organising the groups. There is the voluntary help there, but it needs good motivation and leadership.

**Betty Fisher**  
227 High Street  
Dunstable, Doncaster  
*Ann Hithersay will be writing about the future of local groups in the March issue – Editor.*

### Holiday exchange?

Last year we had a holiday in Cornwall. For practical reasons we rented a cottage, which as it turned out was completely unsuitable. We thought, surely there was someone in Cornwall who had a handicapped person and therefore suitable facilities?

I live in Farnborough, Hants, 35 minutes on the main-line to London; also near the M3 to London. Windsor and the River Thames are nearby. So are Thorpe Park Leisure Centre, the New Forest and lots more, plus a new recreational centre.

I am 10 minutes from the station and walking precinct at Farnborough. I have suitable housing and facilities, plus off the road parking.

There are lots of people who have facilities like this and need to know that they can have similar facilities on holiday.

If there is anyone in the country who is interested in a holiday exchange, I would be delighted to hear from them. Of course, I realise this has to be carefully handled. But exchanges are operated all over the world, so they must work!

**Elizabeth Piper**  
4 Clouston Road  
Farnborough, Hants



## REPORTS

### Social Action

#### Broadcasting Conference

## Lots of social but where was the action?

The first ever residential Social Action Broadcasting Conference held at Loughborough University last December brought together nearly 200 broadcasters and representatives of voluntary bodies and community radio stations.

It was organised jointly by the Volunteer Centre's Media Project and the Centre for Mass Communication Research, University of Leicester.

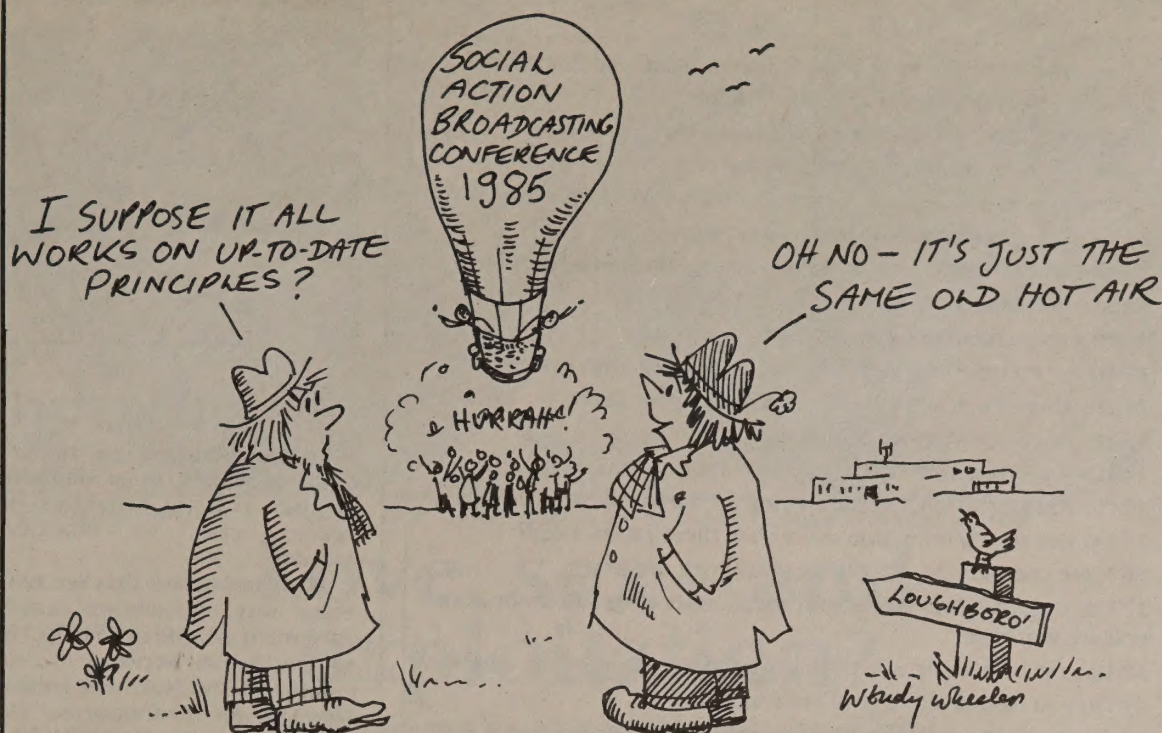
The Media Project was set up in 1977 as the result of a similar conference which looked at the range of programmes likely to involve voluntary and community groups and ways of working together.

This conference reviewed the achievements so far and discussed how we would like things to go in the future.

The first day concentrated on the future. A great deal of time was spent in rather fruitless discussion of what was meant by social action broadcasting, and a not immediately relevant look at where the new technology (cable and satellite) would take us.

I was far more concerned with programming now, not so much to increase the number of programmes made for and about disabled people, but to have the issues aired in mainstream programmes.

People with disabilities should be involved in making and producing all sorts of pro-



grammes; they should be on quiz shows or featured as characters in soap operas and plays. This would need a far reaching change in attitude by programme makers.

The second day of conference was spent looking at how a particular issue has been dealt with by the media - unemployment.

The day began with a lecture on unemployment in the '80s which I felt was rather academic.

After lunch we split up into smaller groups to examine various aspects of presentation.

I joined the group on "public image" because I believe the media is very powerful as a means of changing people's attitudes. There are still some documentaries made about people with disabilities which are full of pathos, yet a programme like *Link* can portray a totally different image.

Unfortunately, the session turned into an argument between the broadcasters and the voluntary bodies about bias, selection methods, etc.

I felt that the topic was both too wide ranging and covered continually in all types of programming from job slots to *Boys from the Black Stuff*. A less "popular" topic might have been more representative.

On the final day, a panel of

some of the original participants of the first conference in 1977, including such eminent people as Paul Bonner, controller of programmes for Channel 4, and Richard Dunn, director of production at Thames, told us how things have changed since those pioneering days.

A strong air of self-satisfaction emanated from the platform which was soon deflated by criticism from the floor.

Many people thought that too much time had been spent defining what social action broadcasting is and ending up none the wiser.

We spent only one session in smaller groups; the rest of the time we were in a huge lecture hall addressed from the podium. Even contributors from the floor had to speak into a microphone. It was hardly conducive to audience participation.

We felt that a conference on broadcasting should have used examples from TV and radio to illustrate points, but no examples were used in the main sessions.

As this was the first residential conference, our criticisms have been noted for next year.

I found the three days stimulating and enjoyable - mainly because of the conversations I had with other delegates between

sessions. The food was excellent too!

**Lindy Reynolds**  
Assistant Press Officer

### Federation of London Dial-a-Rides Conference

## "Assert your right to mobility"

The frustrations of being a disabled traveller in London were highlighted at the Right to Ride conference organised by the Federation of London Dial-a-Rides (FOLDaR) in December as part of the Greater London Council's public transport week.

Dial-a-Ride and taxi card users considered three themes. Dave Wetzel, chairman of the GLC's Transport Committee outlined the role of the GLC in starting up and funding both schemes. He called on disabled people to become more political, not necessarily in a partisan sense, and to assert their right to mobility.

Workshops considered the present services and how well they meet the needs of disabled people.

## MONTH IN PARLIAMENT



### HOUSE OF LORDS

## Concern about limited drugs

From 1 April, the Department of Health proposes to cut the range of medicines which can be prescribed on the NHS. The argument is that a limited list of less important drugs will result in substantial savings.

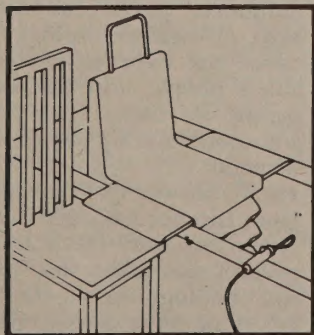
During a short debate in the Lords on 15 January, Baroness Masham of Ilton pointed out that there is great concern among severely disabled people, many of whom had written to her, about limiting prescriptions. She urged the Government to look sympathetically at the specialised needs of this group.

Lord Glenarthur, for the Government, noted her comments. He was sure that the experts who are compiling the list would be well aware of the views expressed by the Baroness.

Consultations continue on the content of the limited list. It will be finalised this month.

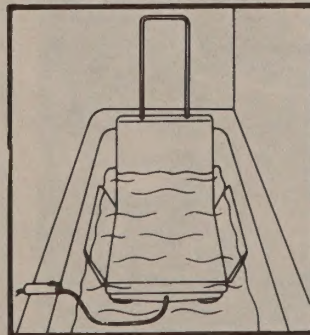
**Sharron Saint Michael**  
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## WATCH IT!

Spastics Sales Centre  
Shop sign - June Maelzer

Like most 17-year-olds, Sarah Paterson is mad about Boy George - but that is where any similarity with other teenagers ends. Because this Drayton teenager is badly handicapped...  
*Eastern Evening News*, 18 December 1984 - Simon Crompton

Barrow victim of cerebral palsy is to address a conference in the Isle of Man next year on the options for independent living to sufferers.  
*North-Western Evening Mail*, 6 December 1984 - Simon Crompton

Please send your contributions (not forgetting the source and your name) to *Watch it!* Disability Now, 12 Park Crescent, London W1N 4EQ.



## CASTLE PRIORY

### Staff burnout!

**Roy Bailey describes his workshop on the need for more care for the care givers**

Stress is taking its toll on managers and caregivers in the human services. There is little doubt about it. Those working in the helping services often have to deal with very demanding situations.

The recent workshop at Castle Priory College (6-9 December) on Staff Stress and Burnout was a potent reminder of this fact.

So what do we do about it?

The workshop concentrated on dealing with stress in ourselves and in our colleagues. Most of the sessions were geared to providing practical ways to deal with stress.

Everyone wanted to learn how to cope effectively with the demands made on them in providing human services. Clearly the cost of caring for others is often highly stressful.

Our early sessions consisted of identifying stress and how it affects our performance in helping. One of the key problems here is the difficulty in recognising in ourselves and others signs of stress and burnout. Before coping effectively with stress, we should first identify those demands in the environment which lead to stress for us.

A second and related task is to then notice the kinds of effects they have upon our physical, emotional, psychological and spiritual health.

The practical sessions in the workshop illustrated how well this could be done.

It was revealing that the separate work groups identified similar sources of demands that lead to stress at work. Some of these were closely tied to work itself like poor communication and

### Are you under too much stress?

#### Check this list

- 1 Have you been drinking, smoking or eating more than usual?
- 2 Do you have difficulty sleeping at night?
- 3 Are you more "touchy" and argumentative than normal?
- 4 Do you have trouble with your boss?
- 5 Have you or a loved one experienced a serious illness recently?
- 6 Have you been recently divorced or separated?
- 7 Has there been an increase in marital or family arguments?
- 8 Have you been experiencing sexual difficulties?
- 9 Has a close relative or friend died?
- 10 Have you married recently or started living with someone?
- 11 Has there been a pregnancy or birth in your family?
- 12 Do you have financial problems?
- 13 Have you been dismissed from work or become unemployed?
- 14 Do you feel jumpy, on edge, flying off the handle at little things?
- 15 Do you watch television more than three hours a day?
- 16 Have you been in trouble recently with the law?
- 17 Has there been an increase in the number of deadlines or hours you are working?
- 18 Have you recently moved or changed the place where you live?
- 19 Do you have trouble with your in-laws?
- 20 Are you exposed to constant noise at home or at work?

#### Answer Key

If you have answered "yes" this many times:

1-5 Stress is not likely to cause any problems.

6-10 Stress is moderate and will not harm you if you watch your diet and get rest.

11-15 Try to eliminate some of the stress in your life or you risk suffering poor health.

16-20 Stress is excessive and may make you susceptible to a major illness.

support resources. However, non-work factors also had a bearing on how we cope at work. Ironically, family commitments can add to the stress of caring.

Having identified the demands of caring that lead to stress, what comes next?

It is important to have someone to talk to and know that they are listening to what we have to say. Exercises in counselling helped to demonstrate how vital listening is for those engaged in the provision of care in the human services. It soon became clear that there were embarrassingly few facilities available to "care for the caregivers". But listening attentively free from interruption is a skill which we can develop in lieu of the compre-

hensive counselling services for caregivers which are so urgently needed.

Even when there is no listener we can help ourselves by practising progressive relaxation, meditation and other forms of mental training. Many of the practical sessions at Castle Priory introduced people successfully to these skills.

When no one will listen, or psyching ourselves "calm, competent and composed" isn't enough, we can always assert ourselves - speak out what is on our mind, without being rude, to the person who is causing the discomfort. Traditionally, care staff, like disabled people, have not been expected to assert themselves, but if they can learn



John Cox talks to workers at the Balmoral Work Centre.

### NICOD to start disability register

John Cox stressed the importance of setting up a disability register in Great Britain on his recent visit to Northern Ireland.

"It is important that we have some way of knowing exactly how many people need help," he said to the Belfast press.

NICOD, the Northern Ireland Council for Orthopaedic Development, will start a register for Northern Ireland at the beginning of February. The province has a population of 1½ million, about the size of Yorkshire, and it is believed that 3,000 people have cerebral palsy.

NICOD is affiliated to The Spastics Society, and provides

treatment, training and accommodation for people with cerebral palsy, spina bifida, muscular dystrophy and Friedrich's Ataxia.

Thelma Greeves, the Organising Secretary, is a member of The Spastics Society's Regions Committee.

On his 2-day visit John Cox met residents at the new hostel for severely handicapped adults at Ardkeen, which opened in July last year and is the first of its kind in the province. 9 of the 10 residents have cerebral palsy.

He also visited the Balmoral Work Centre for 35 physically handicapped workers and was NICOD's guest speaker for their Celebrity Lecture.

to do so, it will be in the interests of everyone.

The many practical ways of dealing with stress offered by the workshop was its major strength. But some of the participants wanted more than a "taster", and calls for an advanced workshop may be met later this year. On the one hand this is a sure sign of success. On the other, it leaves us with a challenging indictment. When are we going to do something substantial about caring for those who spend large parts of their lives caring for others?

Fortunately, the workshop ended with renewed optimism and promises of new beginnings. Participants set personal and professional goals to help themselves

and others to cope with the stress of caring and some of the Society's centres are already involved with putting the skills into practice.

Perhaps stress is inevitable, even to get the best out of ourselves. Beyond this, however, we all need help - as the workshop revealed. It is time we started caring for each other.

*Roy Bailey is principal clinical psychologist and head of the psychology department at Manor House Hospital, Aylesbury. His book, Coping with Stress in Caring (from which the check list is taken) will be published by Blackwell Scientific Publications in May, price probably £6.50.*



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### The Freddie Green interview

*Continued from page 2*  
Society and local authorities.

FG: It's very wrong to embark upon a confrontation stance because at the end of the day we do to an alarming degree rely on the good will of the local authorities. Anything that brings about a worsening of partnership relations between ourselves, parents and local authorities must be detrimental to children's needs.

MW: What do you see as the role of the CSIE?

FG: I see it as a very important part of our information and advisory service.

MW: Rutland House parents would like to see responsibility for over-19s transferred from social services to education authorities.

FG: I think that changing responsibilities would do little to change the nature of the adult education service. You can only do that by making it less discretionary.

MW: Rutland House parents would also like to see the Society reconsider its policy towards assessment, and they think the system at Fitzroy Square is inadequate. What is your opinion?

FG: The Society is reconsidering its attitude towards the assessment services it currently provides. I think we should provide a pre-eminently regional service with, where necessary, the back-

up of Fitzroy Square.

I don't define assessment in the way that some people have defined it within the Society in the past. I see it as part of information combined with an advisory service, not pre-eminently an assessment service.

MW: What is the future of Churchtown Farm?

FG: Churchtown Farm is a unique facility in the voluntary sector. Somehow we've got to sort out the funding for it so that cost is not the bar it appears to be to a number of special schools.

MW: Microtechnology has raised the expectations of disabled people and able-bodied people for them. How far can and should the Society meet this demand?

FG: To answer that question, Dr Janet Larcher has been carrying out a feasibility study into the present and future use of microtechnology within the Society's schools and colleges and affiliated schools. This month we come to the end of the study and we shall then determine the policy implications.

I very much hope that we shall become leaders in this area of special education.

We have made a beginning. Last month we took delivery of £18,000 worth of equipment, and we shall shortly have a development officer for micro-electronics.

This might be a controversial thing to say within the Society,

but we know educationally that we can only put our faith in the machine that will have the sort of software we are seeking, and that is the BBC.

MW: In the past, The Spastics Society pioneered academic opportunities for disabled people, Conductive Education in England, and further education at colleges like Dene and Beaumont. Can the Society innovate in the future?

FG: I think it can. In the area of under-5s and in outreach services the Society will be moving into new fields. The same is true in microtechnology. For the education service to become involved in adult provision may not be pioneering in concept, but in terms of existing practice in adult residential and day care provision in this country, it is.

### SDP differences

*Continued from page 1*

He also found the idea of each party producing one unsatisfactory. "It becomes a competitive auction of commitment," he said.

He argued that a commitment to the needs and rights of disabled people runs through all SDP policy and has surfaced in many of its policy documents.

"Disability is part of citizenship. We don't want to separate it off," he said.

SDP parliamentary spokesmen and Society representatives meet this month.



February, the month of St Valentine's Day, when lovers exchange cards and protestations of love.

But what if you have few friends, let alone a lover? And what if you have a physical disability which you think makes you unattractive, and you live with your parents, or in a residential centre, or in the community, and you are lonely?

Able-bodied people who have the confidence might try a social club, a dating agency or a marriage bureau, routes that are generally closed to people with disabilities. Social clubs operate on a round of activities which pre-supposes mobility, while dating agencies and marriage bureaux are unlikely even to mention disability on their questionnaires.

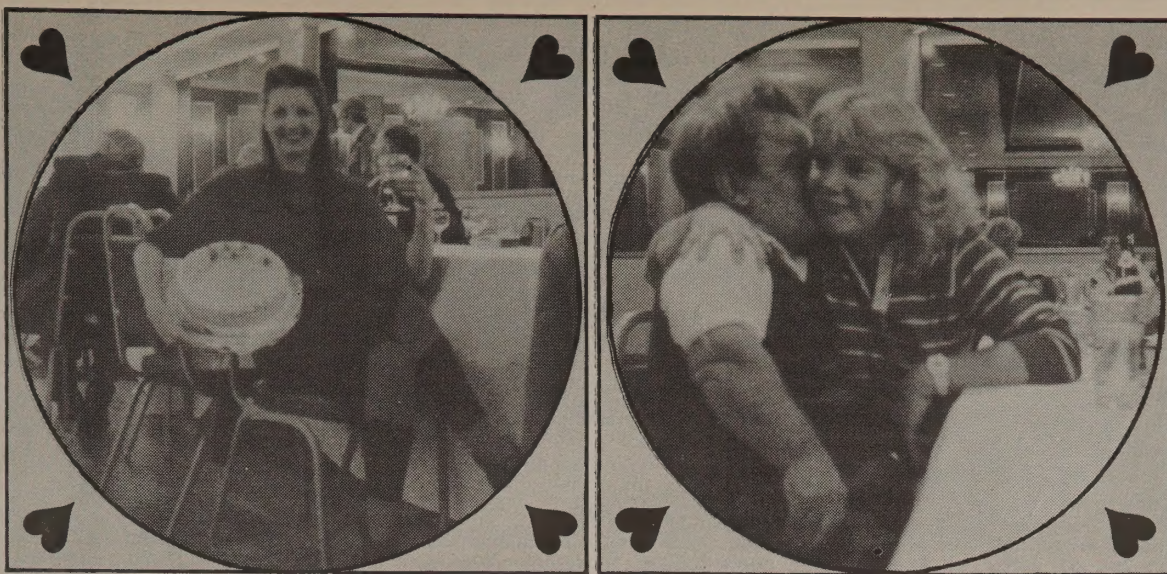
As the press officer for Date-line said, "People have paid for introductions and they are expecting to meet people who are sound in wind and limb."

Voluntary organisations have not been very successful at organising social get-togethers - which tend to be for one disability anyway - and PHAB caters only for people aged 15 to 30.

Enter the Outsiders Club, which aims "to provide isolated people with the opportunity to meet or get in contact with one another for friendship, love and/or mutual self-help."

It offers people who feel emotionally scarred or physically ugly the chance of love and sexual relationships and it also helps them with their sexual problems.

"I enjoy the Outsiders because I feel I can relate emotionally to other members," said a man with ms, who has been a member for 4 years. "The club supplies most



Left, Tuppy Owens is 40. Right, "Lofty" with friend at the New Ambassadors Hotel in London.

## Love, sex - and exploitation?

Mary Wilkinson looks into The Outsiders Club

members join with good intentions!"

Besides the usual questions about age, marital status, career, interests and appearance, the form seeks to know about living arrangements, shyness, loneliness, what effects the disability may have on a person, the difficulties of making and keeping relationships and the kind of disability it would be easiest to encounter or communicate with.

It also asks what the person wants from the club, the sort of relationship they envisage and the sort of person they find attractive.

There is not a lot of room for replies.

Elizabeth-Ann Colville



Club members at a monthly lunch.

important needs for people who are shrugged off by society yet feel they are able to relate to each other."

There are about 800 members scattered over the British Isles - though by September last year only 298 of them had paid their annual subscription due in January (£12 for those in work, £5 for those who are not).

Half the members are physically disabled and of the other half most are young men aged 18 to 25 who have social hang-ups. About one quarter of the members are women, a source of concern for the club. 5 per cent are known to be referred from professional services.

It is hard to know how many people have found happiness through the Outsiders Club. 51 members have actually reported that they are married or attached to another member. Last October one happy marriage, that of John and Bessie Williams, was featured on TV, in *Claire Rayner's Casebook*.

No one is turned away from the club, provided they have filled in a "very confidential" form "just to be certain that all

Written permission is sought to put your address, telephone number and personal information on a confidential list which is circulated to members.

People are warned that once their name and phone number are printed, they may get phone calls from strangers that "might be difficult to deal with." They are advised to be patient with people who seem strange or socially unsophisticated. "The purpose of the club is to help them to learn and improve, not to shun them."

New members receive the list (which is updated every 3 months), a welcoming letter which may suggest suitable contacts, a 68-page booklet which lists useful organisations and offers helpful advice on a whole range of problems members may feel they have, and a library list.

They also receive *Inside*, the quarterly newsletter written by members. (The number of advertisements in *Inside* is deceptive: only one of them has been paid for.)

Though members do get together around the country, the club's activities centre on Lon-

don. In lieu of premises, which it has not been able to afford, the club holds a lunch every month in an accessible restaurant or hotel, and there is a party twice a year.

Last December, the lunch and Christmas party were held at a bar at the University of London Union. About 30 people, some in wheelchairs, arrived for the lunch and sat around at small tables talking, eating and drinking wine.

Volunteer members, often disabled themselves, were on hand to make introductions and help things along. (Helpers receive only expenses and they have to sign a document promising not to pass on information about members to anyone else.)

One of the helpers was Christine Nocek, who has cp, and joined the club 4 years ago when she was depressed at the break-up of her marriage.

Meeting people helped her to build up her confidence again.

"Because I've overcome my shyness, I can help shy new members," she said. She is also responsible for sending birthday cards to club members.

Margaret Stone, who has difficulty with speech and mobility, has just taken on the secretarial work of the club.

"I wrote to Tuppy Owens about getting a job. I wasn't thinking of working in the club: I never thought I would be good with people," she said. "But Tuppy thought I would be good so I thought, 'I'll give it a try'. And I just love it. It makes me feel I'm doing something really useful."

Tuppy Owens is the life and soul of the Outsiders Club. At 40, she can look like a sexy school-girl or a school-marm. She has long, henna-coloured hair, and heart-shaped, rose tinted spectacles. She also has a B.Sc. and is working for a post-graduate diploma in human sexuality at St George's Hospital.

(Her childhood nickname, from "Little Tuppence Halfpenny", suits her better than Rosalind.)

She started the club in 1979 supported by some friends, Dr Patricia Gillan, a consultant psychologist with connections at the Maudsley Hospital, and two disabled men, David Cooper, and Nigel Verbeek, editor of *Soundaround*, the tape magazine for blind people, who now operates the 24-hour answering service.

"It really started when Patricia Gillan sent a patient to me because she thought he should go to a strip club and I would know

one which wheelchairs could get into. So I got to know him quite well and eventually he managed to lose his virginity. He was terribly happy. In the meantime Nigel had lost his sight. These two things happening started the whole thing off."

She has kept the club going for 6 years with flare and determination, running it from a basement flat off Park Lane and subsidising it out of her own pocket.

"I've got a sort of talent to match people in a way that a lot of people are embarrassed about," she says. "I don't feel I'm controlling them. I just feel that if I've got that sort of talent and I use it, I'm doing something worthwhile."

Besides, she loves what she does. "We have a lot of fun".

Where else would disabled people find parties organised for them which offer dancing, alcohol and strippers (of both sexes)?

Along the way Tuppy has acquired some patrons for the club to give it recognition and support - the Rev Chad Varah of the Samaritans, Rosemary Sutcliffe, the writer, Stewart Henry, the disc jockey who has ms, and most recently TV agony-aunt Claire Rayner and Dr Michael Smith of the Family Planning

Association.

In 1981 she set up a charitable trust called the Social Habilitation and Integration Trust (the acronym is a typical bit of Tuppy humour) to increase public awareness of the needs of disabled people through research and education.

The 7 trustees include herself, Ann Darnborough, chairperson of the National Information Forum and co-author of the *Directory for Disabled People*, and Patricia Gillan.

Apart from sponsoring *Emotions in Focus*, an international exhibition of art by disabled people for IYDP in 1981 and "producing" *Inside*, the trust has not been active. There has been no meeting since September 1982 when the accounts revealed a deficit of over £4,500 allowing for a £2,000 loan from Tuppy. Two of the trustees admit that they have not kept up with its affairs.

Last year an advisory panel of experts was set up. Although it includes representatives from PHAB, the Association of British Introduction Agencies, the FPA and so on, there are some obvious names missing, such as Sexual and Personal Relationships of the Disabled (SPOD) and voluntary organisations for people with physical disabilities.

In SPOD's case, it is a corporate member of the club. But Morgan Williams, the general secretary, admits he is careful about which clients he introduces to the Outsiders.

"It is not necessarily because I think there is anything 'untoward' but I think the way Tuppy runs it is a bit over the top," he said.

However, for others, suspicions of the "untoward" persist, fuelled by outbreaks of bad publicity in the popular press and, most recently, by a vitriolic attack on the club and Tuppy Owens in *Spare Rib* (August 1984).

The authoress, Anne Rae, is disabled, a member of SPOD's Council and of the feminist organisation, Liberation Network.

For 18 months she was at the centre of the Outsiders Club as a member and a secretarial helper. In 1982 she left, disillusioned by her own experiences and those of other people, and by what she had come to know about Tuppy.

Continued on page 15

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Dene College at Tonbridge in Kent runs a 2-year course for 45 profoundly handicapped people of 16+. Its main aim is to facilitate the transition of the students from dependent childhood to a more independent adulthood.

When the college opened in 1978, it was seen as a pioneer in the field: an attempt to escape from the institutional approach, where tightly scheduled activities imposed from above were carried on in large groups, and people were treated all alike.

John Hall, the principal, and I believe in a holistic approach which involves the student, staff and parents. But even at the discussion stage there were many difficulties to be overcome.

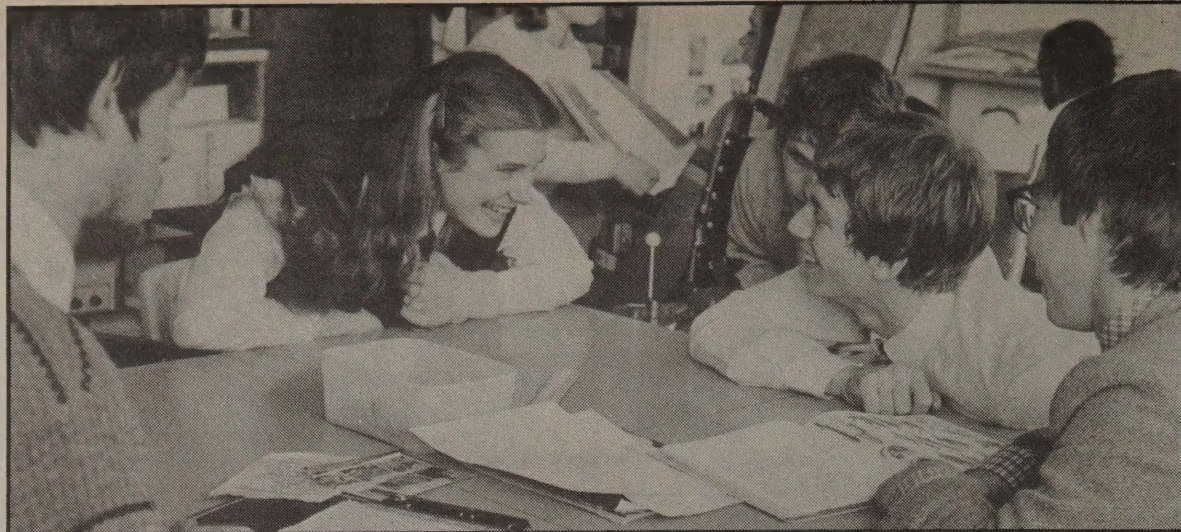
One was how to combine the roles of teaching and caring under one roof, each with its own tradition of training, salary scales, holidays and hierarchy. As someone who had been a residential social worker, teacher and manager, I was aware of the antipathies existing in other establishments and of how the residential social worker feels at a disadvantage.

We decided to raise the status of the residential social worker. This we did by avoiding split work shifts, offering the same holiday periods, as near as possible, and giving care staff responsibility for two or three students in the areas of pocket money, communication with parents, and education. Each member of the care staff was to work in the same educational divisions as his or her students and to take on a parental role, questioning the work that the student was undertaking.

To make teaching staff more aware of the care staff's work - and of the reasons for a student's behaviour - they were to have experience of working in care situations.

Also, to encourage all staff to be involved with the care and management of the students it was decided to hold regular staff meetings.

We felt that all parents should be involved in the college to some degree. They should be encouraged to attend parent workshops and to visit during the week as well as at weekends so that they could see what their son or daughter was doing. Thus they would be able to comment, criticise or praise in a construc-



It's not all hard work! From left, Gary Bilsby, Henrietta Boulle, a volunteer helper from Tonbridge Grammar School, Graham Hunt and Matthew Grinyer.

## A right to be adult

Peter Knight explains the thinking behind a course for profoundly handicapped young people at Dene College, a further education college run by The Spastics Society.

tive manner. If they were concerned about the care of their children they could approach the care tutor and, if they were not satisfied, they could discuss the matter with John or myself.

For parents (and some staff), the course at Dene College can cause problems, because they expect that the child will become adult in 2 years.

To me, "growing up" is a continuing process, from the moment one is born to the moment one dies, and it is possible that some people never do become "adult".

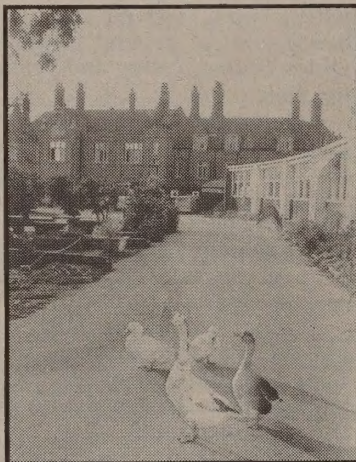
For our students it is particularly difficult because there has been a deliberate attempt on the part of some parents, if not some teachers, to inhibit the transition. Most of the students are in the position of having had their development encouraged until the age of 11 and then stopped because the adults concerned were unwilling to recognise that profoundly intellectually impaired people have a right to adulthood.

In our curriculum there are five areas where staff and parents have to face "growing up".

First, privacy. This causes problems because most of the bedrooms are multi-bedded, 2 or 3 to a room, so there is always liable to be someone around.

People should be allowed to be alone if they wish, so we have to be aware that this may mean walking out of a room. It could also mean showing a person that a garden at home or the grounds of the college can allow a degree of privacy.

Second, sexuality. This is an apparently neglected area, poss-



Dene College

ibly because the profoundly mentally and physically impaired are not expected to be aware of their sexuality. At Dene College there is a sex education programme which covers the human body, contraception and personal relationships. Heterosexual and homosexual relationships are neither encouraged nor condemned and individual counselling or group discussion is available if needed.

Third, financial independence. This can only be achieved by having one's own pocket money and for most students this would be the Severe Disability Allowance. Either we apply for it or invite parents to do so.

Fourth, information. This is really feedback on how the student is affecting other people. Since most of them cannot read to any great extent, they have to be told.

Fifth, decision making. This is encouraged by trying to get a student to decide what he wants to do, eg. have a cup of tea, and then sticking to his answer, yes or no, so that he begins to realise that what he says counts.

This progresses to the point where students who wish to be involved in their case conferences at the end of the second year can indicate what they want to do next - go home, go to a residential placement or an adult training centre.

A student union was formed at the college, but this was fraught with difficulty since all the student officers of the union needed staff shadows to help them fulfil their functions. The union tended to become a vehicle for

staff opinions and other students were not involved in union activities.

Now the students elect six representatives who form a council and meet weekly under the guidance of a member of staff. They are free to discuss whatever they wish. Generally this revolves round social functions but occasionally students raise matters associated with college policy and we attempt to resolve them.

Since the profoundly intellectually impaired student is interested in the relationship between things rather than ideas, and his thinking is still closely associated with doing, it may be best to envisage the curriculum not in terms of subjects but of experience and activities.

The curriculum model most likely to meet the needs of students attempting further education would be that of the Further Education Unit: a triangle, which moves from "experience" through "organised reflection" to "specific learning".

The triangle can be infinitely large or small. For example, within a teaching setting, which might be designed as a reflective step on one scale, will occur experiences which are leading to short term reflection and thus to specific learning. Furthermore, students will have many experiences which are not planned as part of their course and they will bring their reflections on these experiences and what they have learned from them into daily activities in the teaching and social groups.

At Dene College, planning experiences is vitally important, for one of the greatest difficulties with our student population is the general lack of ability to cope with the unexpected. Digressions and diversions become activities in their own right and

are not seen as part of the overall task, so the original objective is lost. The experience, therefore, has to be organised in great detail and given necessary support.

It is our desire to construct a curriculum which meets these aims and at the same time recognises the student as a whole person, a central unit in all our planning.

Experiences must have meaning for the student within his intellectual compass. This is why assessment is so important.

The assessment of Dene College students is usually made before their arrival because the majority have previously attended schools run by The Spastics Society.

Assessment of the profoundly handicapped person needs to be made by a multi-professional team. But as Sally Tomlinson put it in *A Sociology of Special Education* (1982), "There has always been some antipathy and power struggles between these professionals."

Medical assessment is relatively easy, but difficulties arise in assessing cognitive ability. Experience has shown that students who are most profoundly physically handicapped are those whose previous assessment was wrong. It is incredibly difficult to ascertain what a severely spastic, non-speaking quadriplegic person is trying to say. But with the advent of the computer - and we have three Apples now - the student is more able to demonstrate his or her true ability.

Students are tested not to discover remedial needs but to establish the level of skills they have reached as a basis for further education. The results, together with observations from former and present staff, are used to identify the needs of the individual student and to extend and vary his or her educational experiences.

As for continuing assessment, it has been difficult to find a procedure which is satisfactory without producing a book some 2½ in. thick! At present we use five methods out of which a composite report is presented including recommendations for future placement. Subjective as these may seem, many people have been involved which brings about a measure of objectivity.

Over the last six years it has become apparent that all students make some progress towards independent adulthood and parents have remarked on the higher level of social maturity. The question is, how will that development be continued after Dene College?

This article is an edited version of 2 papers written as an MA thesis by Peter Knight, vice-principal of Dene College. For copies of the papers, contact Peter Knight, Dene College, Shipbourne Road, Tonbridge, Kent Tel: (0732) 355101

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Neath Hill Professional Workshop is a unit of The Spastics Society.



Mike Smith (left), Peter Knight and friend.



# If you can't walk, you can't go to school

Lillemor Jernqvist reports on her lecture tour of Poland

At the request of the Polish Association of Friends of the Children (TPD), I spent a week last November lecturing in Warsaw and Krakow on early intervention treatment and the education of severely handicapped children.

Early intervention in Poland is dominated by Bobath-orientated physiotherapy and its sole aim is to teach a child to walk. Young children receive several hours physiotherapy daily and the mothers are instructed to continue the treatment at home. Certainly the results were impressive and there appeared to be many ambulant children among the handicapped.

Young children in urban areas receive attention from well-equipped and well-staffed rehabilitation centres until they reach school age. Then, sadly, it all stops.

While there is a network of special schools for children with learning difficulties, there is nothing for severely handicapped children. This explains the great emphasis on walking. An ambulant cp child can go to a normal school.

I met several children who attended normal school successfully. But since they have to keep up with the normal curriculum and no adaptations are made or aids provided, only the most able pupils can cope.

Children with moderate or severe cerebral palsy receive home tuition which is quite generous, though it does put tremendous pressure on the



*This girl has learnt to walk well but she cannot use her hands.*

mother, who becomes isolated at home with her child. I spent a few hours with such a mother. She had been pregnant when she graduated as an engineer five years ago, and since then she has not been able to work. Now, understandably, she is near breaking point.

Through their committee for motor handicapped children, the 6,000 parents who belong to TPD have been campaigning for schools for severely handicapped children, and the Polish government is now planning a

limited network.

I found that parents as well as teachers were very keen to learn about Conductive Education and wanted to discuss its introduction into some of their centres. They said they were not satisfied with the sharp division between education and treatment or with the poor communication between teachers and therapists.

The recent seminar in Budapest organised by the International Cerebral Palsy Society had been an inspiration to them.

There was tremendous interest in English facilities for handicapped people, everything from teaching and communication aids to tables and chairs. Polish parents were often envious when I described our services and policies.

Cerebral palsy, especially spastic diplegia, is said to be increasing in Poland. The reason given is the increasing number of premature births thought to be caused by food shortages and a lower standard of living. However, I saw few food queues and those I did see were for meat and chocolate.

CPO is now starting on a three-stage education programme in co-operation with TPD and its committee. Information has been sent; a group of Polish professionals will be visiting England later this year; and a group of English professionals will then go and work in Poland.

*Lillemor Jernqvist is senior educational psychologist at The Spastics Society.*



*Dave Williams (left) and Rick Delvin are all set (with VW and CPO insignia).*

## They're off to Poland - want to go too?

Rick Delvin and Dave Williams, winners last November of the Duke of Edinburgh's gold award for riding their bikes from England to Australia in aid of charity, are at it again.

In August and September they will be pedalling 1200 miles from London to Warsaw on behalf of Cerebral Palsy Overseas. They aim to raise at least £3,000 to buy equipment for handicapped people in Poland.

Now they are looking for 8 cp cyclists to join them on their trip through France, Belgium, Germany, Czechoslovakia and Poland. They also hope to meet other cp riders on the way.

Rick and Dave are busy planning the expedition and seeking funds and sponsorship. So far Volkswagen has promised a "camper van" and petrol. Agu

Sports is giving cycling clothes and equipment; Pirelli, tyres and tubes; P & O Ferries a free crossing for everyone one way; Viscount 83, 2 new bikes; and Weetabix, 10 cases of Alpen!

They still need food, camping equipment and, ideally, individual sponsorship.

If you are a keen cyclist, enjoy camping and would like to help handicapped people in Poland, here's your chance.

"We hope those who cycle with us will lead expeditions themselves before long", said Rick.

There's also talk of entering for the Duke of Edinburgh awards. More golds?

*If you are interested, contact Richard Gray, CPO, 37 Queen Anne Street, London W1M 9FB. Tel: 01-631 1778.*

## More fruitful than conferences

CPO sends its first professional team to Cyprus

The first professional team organised by Cerebral Palsy Overseas spent a week in Cyprus last December. It was funded by The Commonwealth Foundation.

The four team members were Dr Derek Ricks, a consultant in paediatric mental handicap at University College Hospital, Margaret Morgan, retired controller of The Spastics Society's Social Services Division, Rosemary McCloskey, tutor organiser at Castle Priory College, and Harold Cragg, ex-product development advisor to The Spastics Society's industrial units.

They divided their time between the Christos Steliou Ioannou Foundation and the Cyprus Society for the Protection of Spastic and Handicapped Children, both in Nicosia.

At the Foundation, a new complex catering for 120 mentally



*Dr Angistoniotis, centre, with Dr Derek Ricks, Margaret Morgan, one of his patients and a member of staff.*

handicapped adults on a day and 5-day basis, they ran seminars and workshops for the staff covering the origins of mental retardation, day to day problems of managing mentally-handicapped people, the use of modern drugs, adult education, care staff training, goal planning, family and personal relationships and modern workshop practice.

At the Cyprus Society's centre, a converted house in the middle of the city, they worked with

staff, parents and children (5 of whom had flown in from Greece) and ended with a parents' forum.

CPO is very pleased about this initial contact.

"We look forward to aiding the future development of staff training programmes and the spread of knowledge in Cyprus", said Richard Gray, CPO's deputy director.

**Dr Derek Ricks** writes of the Cyprus Society's centre:

The setting, a large house in Nicosia, was very informal and domestic, with small rooms linked by a network of corridors. The staff therefore work in close contact, each with a small group of children.

Their expertise is essentially problem-orientated, related to the idiosyncrasies of each child. I was impressed that it was not subservient to any particular "system" of physiotherapy or teaching. Nor was it rigidly "prescribed" by the medical or

psychology staff, who were splendid participants themselves in the trial and error dialogue which was the foundation of the treatment programme for each child.

Such a working atmosphere capitalises on experience and creates opportunities for each staff member to innovate and assess honestly not only their own tactics but those of their colleagues. Indeed, to our delight, points we had raised in our workshop with staff who did speak English were taken up and discussed so actively that we were ignored. There was no need for the centre's medical consultant, Dr Angistoniotis, to apologise!

The parents' attitude was a testimony to this working atmosphere and to the staff. They were confiding, trusting of staff, yet forthright and quite prepared to put forward their own ideas, knowing that they would be taken seriously.

I suspect that such an open and fruitful exchange is also a testimony to the qualities of Dr Angistoniotis. The warmth and trust he generated in parents was evident during our discussions.

I met most of the parents of

children attending the centre and a few who were contemplating sending their child there.

Their attitudes, concern and questions were similar to those one would meet in the UK. However, one or two features were, perhaps, distinctive.

I was struck by how invariably not only parents came, but a grandparent or neighbour too.

All the parents indulge their handicapped children. They were unhappy to refuse food or sweets to already overweight children or to persevere with handling techniques which the children found uncomfortable or were reluctant to tackle.

It was impressive to see the various ways in which the centre's staff attempted to overcome this kindly indulgence. They took care to check with parents whether particular advice was feasible in their house and whether it worked, and so relied on the effectiveness of their advice rather than their professional authority. We could all learn from this.

I found the whole trip most enjoyable and a much more fruitful way to use our experience (such as it is) than giving conferences.

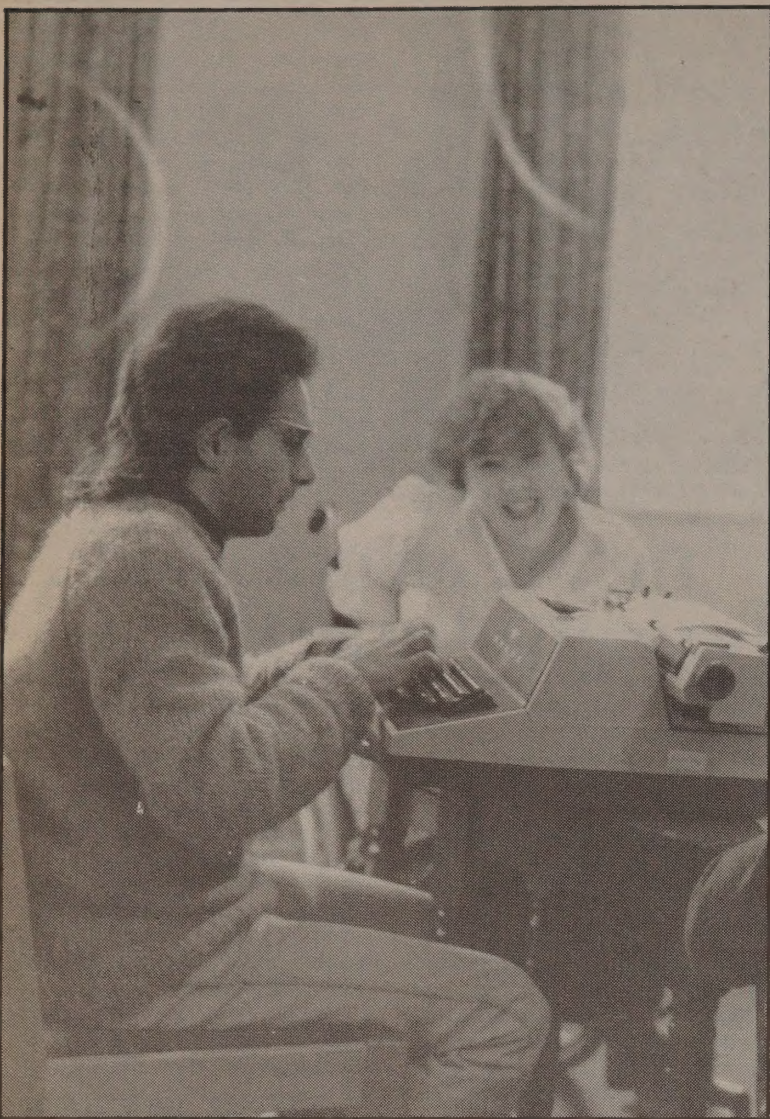


*Parents and professionals see the team off at the airport.*



*The new Christos Steliou Ioannou Foundation centre outside Nicosia.*





Hanif Kuveishi types out for Loraine Gordon.



# Royal Court runs first theatre

## Chewed biros and the sound of crossing out

Over the years the Royal Court Young People's Theatre has run writing workshops with all age groups from 7 years upwards, but, strangely, this was the first get-together of disabled writers.

It came about as a result of the collaboration of the Royal Court and The Spastics Society on a production and tour of *Abel's Sister* by Yolande Bourcier of the Princess Marina Centre, and Timberlake Wertenbaker, a professional writer.

The weekend event seemed like a speeded up film. Interested writers homing in on Fitzroy Square from Newcastle, Lancaster, Hereford, and various parts of the south-east.

The programme of work *had* to be good. Equally, expectations of how fast people could write, and how much live theatre they had seen - some of them none at all - needed to be considered.

It is imperialistic to assume that everyone in the world has heard of the Royal Court, and judging by the sea of expectant faces crammed into a tiny room on the first evening, only vague

notions of the Court and its work were known to the writers. A video film from the BBC examined writing for theatre really vividly.

On the Saturday morning, the air was alive with ideas and nervousness. Some writers were clearly familiar with starting out on work, while to others it was new.

It never gets easier. Broken pencils. Chewed biros. The rapidly repetitive sound of crossings-out on a typewriter. Much talk about writing from your own experience. Head scratching and grinding of teeth.

On the Saturday night the whole group (18, plus 6 tutors and a number of care staff) went off to the theatre: the National Theatre (*Little Hotel on the Side*, *She Stoops to Conquer*, *Doomsday*); the RSC at the Barbican (*Peter Pan*); the Royal Court (*Saved*); and the English National Opera at the London Coliseum (*Tosca*). The wide variety of theatre experience gave a mid-night feast to chew over before the morning session.

Re-writes. College experiences. Scenes of child cruelty. Vivid worlds of gruesome beasts brought to life through well-conceived dialogue. Memories of the First World War - and more. Northern Ireland. Learning to dance in shady circumstances. These were some of the preoccupations.

Sunday afternoon. Time marching on. Two Royal Court actors arrived, trudging through the snow. Hurried photocopying. The readings began. At first a stunned tiredness, quickly replaced by a sense of the significance of the moments when actors bring the written text to life.

The concluding moments of the weekend came much too quickly. With more snow, trains to catch and cars pulling up outside, parting words were too brief.

It's now up to the writers to decide whether or not theatre writing is something that they can continue with.

Most of them must see much more new live theatre, and keep going.

They now have a sympathetic producing theatre to read their work, and urge them on, but the individual passion of the writer remains with the individual, whether disabled or not.

**David Sulkin**

Director of the Royal Court Young People's Theatre

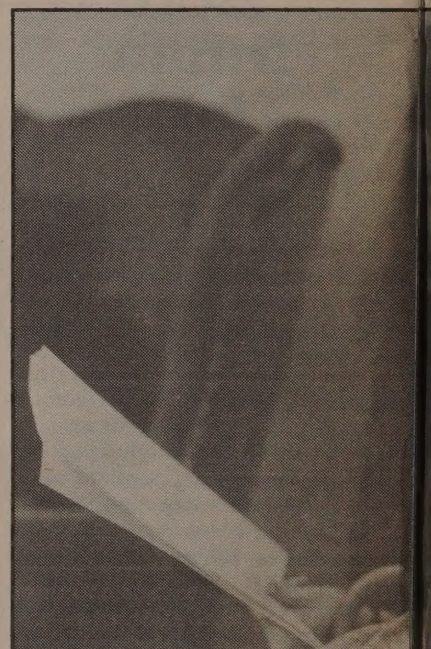
The Spastics Society and the Royal Writing for Theatre Workshop for Square on 11-13 January. It was the

Expert guidance was provided and Hanif Kuveishi along with W. Cloves of the Royal Court's Young Sulkin.

Though there was an atmosphere amongst the participants at the start (right), by Sunday afternoon a lot like David Hindmarch's piece (below).



David Sulkin taking dictation from



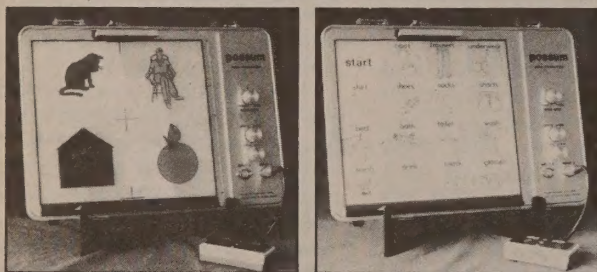
Suzie Burston (right) and Llinos Jones

# possum

I am able

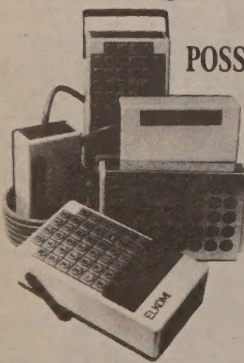
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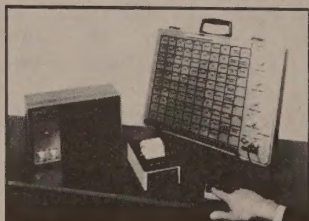
- ★ Portable and easy to use.
- ★ Simple interchange of overlays.
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- ★ Any Possum input will operate.

### Communicator 100



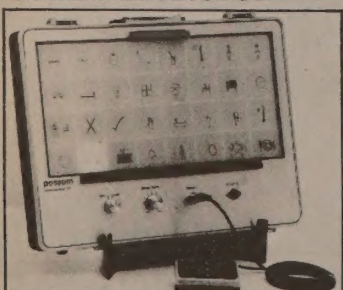
- Built-in rechargeable batteries.
  - 4 memory locations each storing 40 selections.
- BOTH the Communicator 100 and the Communicator 100SP have:
- Call square to attract attention.
  - Fully adjustable scan-rate, flash-time and recall rate.
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Tony Newton of the Royal Court (right) with Alison Allen and David Thompson from Beaumont College.



Playwright Thomas



# workshop for disabled people

Art Theatre ran their first ever workshop for people with disabilities at Fitzroy Square's first IYY event.

Inviting playwrights Caryl Churchill, Tony Pinnock, Tony Newton and Jeff Pinnock, Tony Newton and Jeff Pinnock's Theatre and director, David

of trepidation and uncertainty the course (see Mark Dower's poem) had been produced - some of it, high quality.

Nigel Tucker



el Hodgson.



over a scene.



Churchill talks to Peter Pearse from school.

## uninspired

Examination, nervous faces  
So off we scurry... to be examined  
But what for?  
Our feelings, our emotions  
Or our intelligence?  
Think, think and with luck I won't look stupid  
But what?  
Do they expect a classic?  
King Lear or Hamlet  
Or this?

## "We were to be creative, uninhibited"

"A writers' course specially for young people and new writers." Neither of us from Worcester College for the Blind had the remotest idea what we were letting ourselves in for.

We travelled by train to Paddington, then taxi to "Fitzrovia" of Dylan Thomas' "next down from Bloomsbury this, you know". I was not so sure.

We entered the centre at Fitzroy Square, soon to be greeted by journalists from BBC Radio 4 and Central Television. "So you've written a play, have you?" We both flushed, answering only with nervous laughter and adopting the pose of wise men who had received a thousand rejection slips apiece.

After dinner we saw a film telling the history of the Royal Court Theatre and we were enlightened at last. We were to be creative, uninhibited - creating not great or radical drama but our own individual interpretations. Great drama is made by the actor.

Saturday was a day of discussion, a day of introductions, of satisfaction as people from all over England began to express themselves in writing; writing that was brought to life by actors



David Hindmarch

Adrian Dunbar and Joanna Whalley from the Royal Court, who gave their own inspiration to the pieces the following day.

The course was all too brief, but a productive session for all that. Such events are vital for the survival of contemporary literature, encouraging the works of all young writers and new writers.

The expert attention of Caryl, David, Hanif, Tony, Jeff and Winsome inspired and edified, bringing potential to blossom freely.

Projects such as these must certainly continue. They provide a pleasant and fruitful atmosphere with people working together, and need all the support that can be mustered.

David Hindmarch

## Lament by David Hindmarch

*Scene 1: In a garden in an old folks' home in Essex. Two old men sit on a bench, looking at flowers and the tall sycamore.*

**Angelo** It's a warm day.  
**Tom** A bit cold.  
**Angelo** Very sunny, this time of year.  
**Tom** Draughty, me bones are stiff.  
*The sycamore moves slightly in the wind.*  
**Angelo** She'll be here in a minute.  
**Tom** I wish it would rain.  
**Angelo** She said she would.  
**Tom** My wife died you know.  
**Angelo** Oh, I think you'll live for a while yet.  
**Tom** No! It's my wife.  
**Angelo** What's wrong with her?  
**Tom** She died two years ago.  
**Angelo** It's them doctors.  
**Tom** It's the bloody cold.  
*Woman can be seen approaching through the trees. She's old and wears bright clothing.*  
**Tom** Oh here she is.  
**Angelo** I thought you said she'd died.  
**Tom** Glenda, with the food, I can see her.

**Angelo** Yes, she's coming through the trees.  
*The trees seem to both of them move apart for her, as she moves mechanically through the garden towards them.*

**Glenda** What are you two boys talking about?

*The men nod their scarved heads*

**Glenda** I've brought the food. It's your favourite, ham and chutney sandwiches.

**Angelo** It's not mine, it's not my favourite.

**Glenda** No, but it's Tom's. He likes them.

*She picks up the picnic table, which stands to the left of the bench. Tom and Angelo watch her intently, observing her posture. Tom laughs.*

**Tom** You could have been a dancer when you were younger.

*Glenda achieves a blush upon her wrinkled face.*

**Glenda** Go on with yer, I know your sort.

**Angelo** It's true, you're like a bird fresh from the nest.

*She doesn't blush but places the table in front of them.*

**Glenda** Food. Let's all enjoy ourselves.

*(This is an extract from two scenes which David wrote during the writing weekend.)*

## VIEWPOINT

### Pigs' tails to tail coats

Valerie Fitzmaurice describes some of the oddities in a Spastics Society shop

"Can you spare an hour or two to help?" queried the notice in the shop window. I went inside, and now, every Wednesday, charity begins when I leave home.

The customers I serve are fascinating. There's Bert who calls several times a week, displaying the solicitude of a close relative visiting the sick in hospital.

"Could I just look at the jacket you're keeping for me?" he implores in hushed tones. When it's produced, he tries it on and proprietorially shows it off to anyone handy, inviting opinions on suitability, durability, prospective washability or dry-cleanability. Then he treats his audience to a brief history of the trousers he bought from us last month before handing back the jacket tenderly and wishing us and it *au revoir*.

"The Tie Man" buys ties at a rate suggesting an Act of Parliament banning their sale for ever is imminent. Our drunken caller doesn't buy anything but just drops in from time to time to challenge the manageress to a fight, squaring up and shadow-boxing, while little old ladies side-step nimbly out of his way.

A joyous bargain-hunter swoops delightedly on a little black number by Jean Muir, a snip at £3, while her friend, slower off the mark, consoles herself with a considered "I'm not sure it's quite you..."

Lots of students come to the shop. Young girls chase dresses and coats worn by their grandmothers in the forties. Trilbies discarded by their grandads as old-fashioned, are snapped up by these trendy young misses of 1985, while their big brothers are watching out for gilt chains and matching ear rings. Punks want chains and nappy-pins; hippies, artificial flowers; and one fellow tracks down Rupert Bear annuals with the zeal of Sherlock Holmes after Moriarty.



Valerie Fitzmaurice

The shop is a meeting-place for all sorts and conditions of men - and women. Breathing a little heavily, one gentleman enquires: "Have you a girl's bathing cap?", adding urgently, "with flowers on it." Or holding a pair of french knickers in front of him, and admiring his reflection, he says: "Do you think these will fit my mother? She's about my size."

There are sad moments too. Quite regularly we are asked for black coats and hats: the bereaved link their grief to a touching sense of occasion. "I can't go to his funeral in colours can I?"

Without the kind of friends who donate saleable stock to our charity it could not function, and we never know what's coming in to help fill our Aladdin's cave. Anything from canned pigs' tails to tail-coats; walking-frames and ice-skates, volumes of Proust and Girlie magazines. We get asked for school-caps, for college rags and striped blazers for amateur dramatics.

I enjoy Wednesdays but they do pose problems. One of our most generous benefactors was spreading out a collection of rather gaudy jewellery on the counter recently, when a smartly-dressed woman with a very carrying voice swept through the doorway.

"Oh," she chortled, falling avidly on the mass of necklaces, brooches and rings. "How marvellous; these are just what I wanted!"

The donor looked suitably gratified.

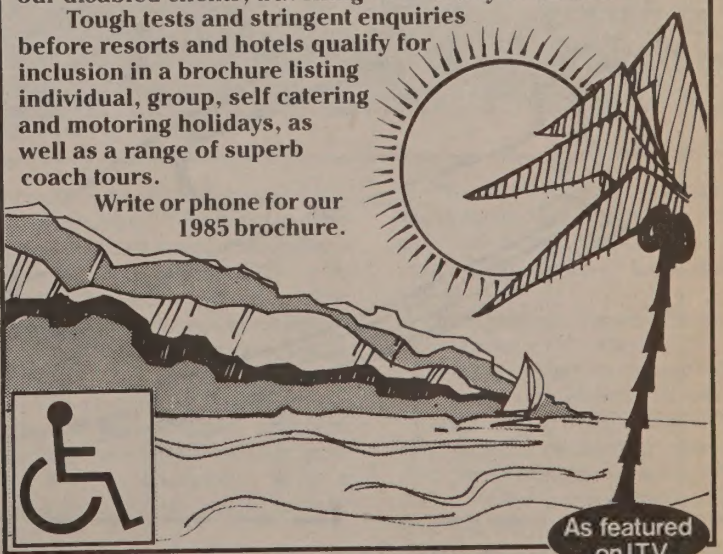
"You see," confided the smart woman, "I've been invited to a bad taste party and these will be just the thing."

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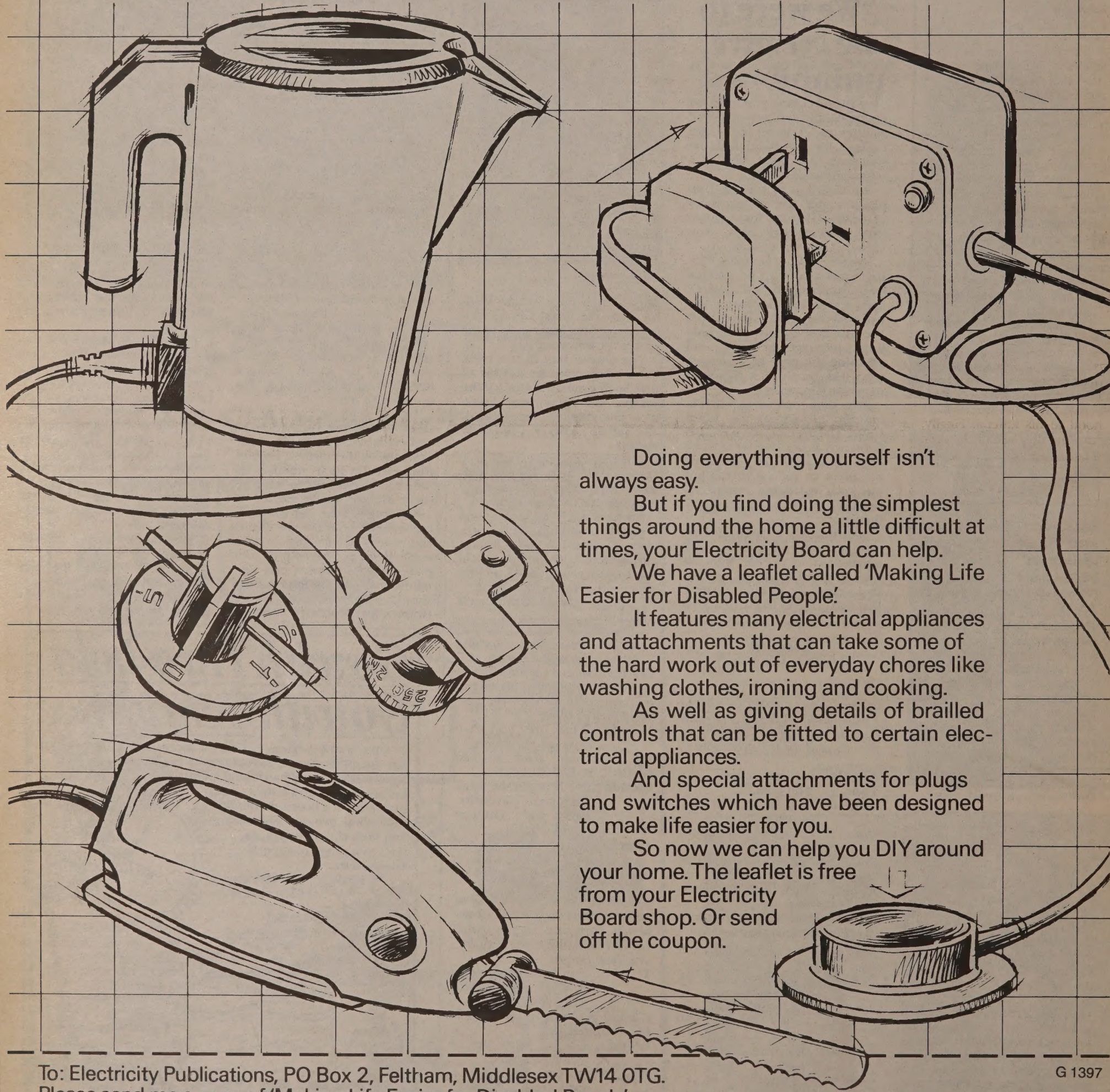
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# OUTLOOK

## Theatre

### A Christmas Carol

The PATH (Practical Arts and Theatre with the Handicapped) production of "A Christmas Carol" at the Jeannetta Cochrane Theatre in London last month highlighted the masque elements of Dickens' "supernatural morality story". There was humour, music and dancing, bright period costumes and a large and enthusiastic cast composed of disabled and able-bodied performers.

Edward Jones and Issy Schlisselmann, who between them played Scrooge and all three of the Yuletide ghosts, are particularly to be congratulated.

The play begins with a dual Dickens, one male and one female, representing respectively the man and his muse. They introduce us to Mr Scrooge (played by Schlisselmann and Jones, one signing, the other speaking) - "a squeezing, wrenching, gasping, scraping, clutching, covetous old sinner" - who meets the festive greetings of employees and family alike with the now celebrated dismissal, "humbug".

It is not long, however, before the supernatural takes over, and he is shaken-up and whirled about by various ghosts and visions of Christmas past, present and future - through scenes of joy, misery and tragedy, from his childhood to his funeral. Finally, in true Morality fashion, he repents

and becomes a kind, generous and happy human being.

The most interesting aspect of Jane Kingshill's production is its approach to the underlying concern of the work: the social injustices of the capitalist system.

Scrooge is the epitome of heartless, exploitative capitalism; in one poignant scene we see the annulment of his engagement to Belle (with whom he could now have been content and fulfilled) as a result of his growing attachment to "another idol": money.

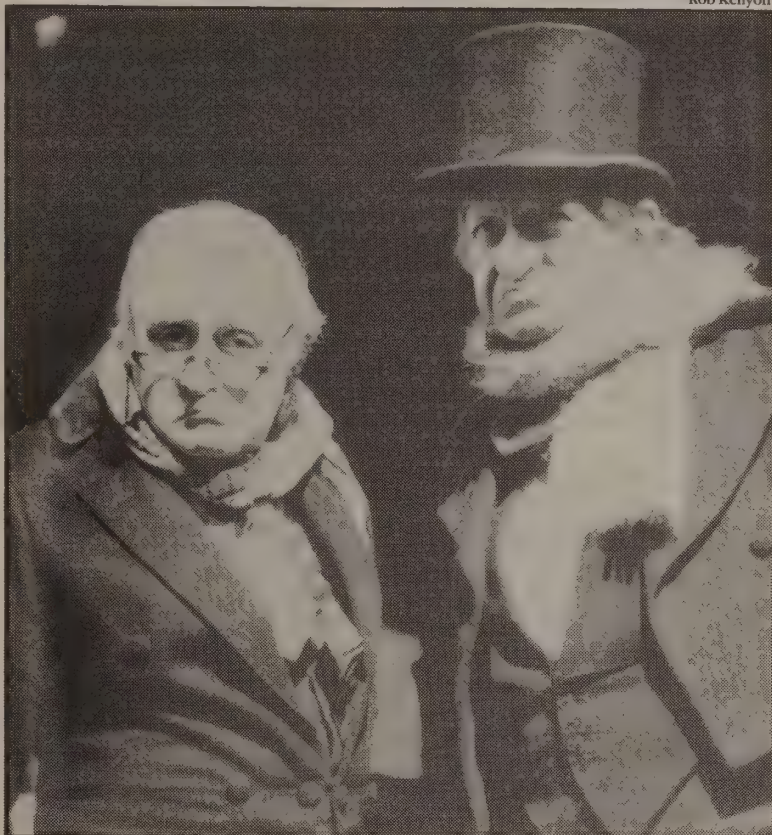
The techniques used to convey this important theme are striking and often Brechtian in nature: including the frequent appearance on stage of the au-

thor as narrator and the use of music and song (courtesy of the splendid Special Jam Band). There is also a great deal of grim humour - particularly powerful in the final chilling view of the future in which faceless people discuss and deride the dead Scrooge behind newspapers and sinister masks, accompanied by the high-pitched wailing of a bowed cello as the carol turns to mocking threnody.

The message - not "seasonable" but relevant in any season - is that "the common welfare... charity, mercy, forbearance and benevolence" are everyone's business.

Alan Durant  
Publicity and Film Officer

Rob Kenyon



Scrooge and Scrooge, Edward Jones (left) and Issy Schlisselmann.

## Books

### Unshared Care: Parents and their disabled children

by Caroline Glendinning  
(Routledge and Kegan Paul, £6.95)

This challenging book is the result of an in-depth study of 17 families who are caring for a severely disabled child at home.

The views of the parents - albeit expressed 8 years ago - confirm what many people already suspect, that community care is in reality care by the family.

Services and benefits have improved during the past 10 years, but many of the underlying problems - uneven provision in different parts of the country, poor communication and feelings of isolation - are still quite common.

One of the book's most interesting features is that the views of the parents are quoted verbatim and without any qualifying comments.

My only regret is that because the interviews took place during the day only 5 of the fathers participated. Too often parents' views are really mothers' views and in my experience fathers are keen to be involved and have important things to say.

In Part I there are chapters on discovering the disability, caring from day to day and effects on the parents and wider family.

Part II covers the views of a group of consumers (the parents) on the services and support provided by local authorities and government departments.

There is an interesting chapter

on voluntary organisations and services, with a timely reminder that less than half the families belonged to a voluntary organisation.

A concluding section deals with disabled children and society.

The 17 families involved in this study were drawn from a much larger group who had received financial help from the Family Fund and the chapters on the impact of the Fund and of the Attendance Allowance are informative.

Much of what parents say in this book will be familiar to parents with a disabled child or adult in the family, but to others - professional and voluntary workers, service planners and providers, administrators - there is much to learn from the frank and honest views of these parents.

Margaret Morgan

### They Keep Going Away

by Maureen Oswin, King Edward's Hospital Fund, London  
(Oxford University Press, £15)

"At no time should any decision be taken about a handicapped child that would not be considered right for an ordinary child," writes Maureen Oswin in *They Keep Going Away*.

The book is the result of 4 years' research into short term care for children with mental handicaps comprising visits to over 100 places providing these services and interviews with 150 families.

Maureen Oswin's previous work described conditions faced by children with mental handicap, especially those languishing unnecessarily in long-stay hospitals, and has done

much to awaken consciences and redirect planners. Even if the findings and recommendations of this new book do not find favour with everyone, they should again make all of us, service planners and service deliverers, sit up and question our policies - or lack of them.

Some of the concepts in the book may appear too idealistic or the range of services recommended may seem too narrow, but vision and correct principles are important. Is short-term care designed to benefit parents, handicapped children or professional workers? Are all three mutually exclusive?

Maureen Oswin claims that often short-term care is misused and falsely recommended. The fault, she believes, is that it has not been developed from any firm principles or aims.

"It has expanded rapidly, and in the absence of any other form of family support, it has acquired a reputation for helping families," she says. "Shortages of resources and staff training are identified as two major problems faced by the service."

The report gives examples of children who have been distressed by the experience of short-term care and the ambivalence of their families. Maureen Oswin points out that hospital is a totally inappropriate place for "holiday" or short-term care. Some children have 15 to 20 admissions a year to such hospitals when it is widely accepted that none should stay there at all.

The book is not, however, an endless catalogue of bad practice. It cites examples of good, locally-based short-term care units with good relationships between parents and staff.

Ms Oswin advocates more short term fostering and other

## Motoring

### The Fiat Hi-Fiorino - goodbye goldfish!

Dignity is not a word that is often applied to transport. As many wheelchair-users and their parents or friends know, the transfer of a severely disabled person into a standard car can never be accomplished with style. It is often easier to stay at home rather than make all that effort for a short outing.

The answer could be a wheelchair transporter, as cheap to run as the standard car, which blends in with the surrounding traffic so that the person in a wheelchair doesn't feel like the proverbial goldfish.

The Fiat Hi-Fiorino is based on the very popular small Fiat van. According to my friends in the fleet world, it is proving both cheap to run and repair.

Except for an optional roof extension and side windows, there are no major changes to the bodywork or to the mechanics of the standard van.

Inside, the back section is fully lined and carpeted. The model I tested also had a sun roof which can be operated by the wheelchair passenger to give extra ventilation.

Full safety equipment is provided, with an inertia reel seat belt and adjustable wheelchair clamps. There is a folding seat for an attendant.

The layout and finish in the front of the van is to the same high standard as the Fiat 127 car - cloth upholstery, full sound proofing and all the instruments and equipment normally found in a small car. In addition there is a very good quality radio/cassette player fitted as standard, with speakers set into the doors.

On the road the van is a pleasure to drive, with light steering and clutch and a really good gearbox with sensible ratios



The fully lined and carpeted back section of the Fiat Hi-Fiorino.

which keeps the 1100cc engine quiet in traffic or on the motorway. Since this is a standard van designed to carry 409 kgs, even the largest passenger will make very little difference to the handling. It is an ideal car for a woman to drive around town.

Parking, however, was a bit difficult even with the help of two door mirrors. If there is a wheelchair passenger, the rear view is restricted.

Fiat give a 12 month unlimited mileage warranty and a 6-year protection against rust damage, so you should have the van for at least 5 years.

#### Technical specifications

1049cc engine with 4 speed gearbox giving 50 bhp  
Top speed 86 mph  
Wheelchair compartment is 4 ft 9 in x 4 ft 9 1/2 in, 4 ft high without extension, 4 ft 9 in high with extension. Overall length 12 ft 3 in.

#### Fuel consumption

Average (laden) 32.18 mpg

#### Price

£4,995 on the road (assuming a road tax exemption certificate is supplied by the customer). Delivered anywhere in the UK.

£500 extra for the roof extension.

The van can be purchased with the help of the Motability, AID Scheme or Fiat Finance all over 5 years.

John Byworth

Further details from John Irving, Fleet Sales Manager, Galway Smith of Huddersfield Ltd, 4 Queensgate, Huddersfield HD1 2UW. Tel: (0484) 48111.



The Fiat Hi-Fiorino.

substitute family schemes based on "friendship". Short term care in an ordinary home can reduce distress and uncertainty, she thinks, and foster parents have responsibility for fewer children than care staff do in residential settings.

The importance of short-term care for handicapped children has been accepted by The Spastics Society. However, it is a sensitive area of social service activity.

All future services should be based on 3 principles.

1. Short-term care should be regarded as a very specialist service needing clearly defined aims based on the principles of child care practice. It requires careful, continuous monitoring with the emphasis on how it may affect individual children.

2. No child should be given short-term care unless the decision has been considered very carefully in terms of that child's needs.

3. Once started, the child's use of short-term care should be reviewed regularly to see whether the pattern could be harmful.

*They Keep Going Away* will, one hopes, encourage parents and professionals to look critically at what is good and bad about the various forms of short-term care, and develop future policies and schemes in partnership with local authorities and voluntary organisations which meet the needs not only of parents but, more importantly, of the children themselves.

John Tizard  
Principal Research and Development Officer, Social Services



Simon Crompton



Doreen Banham and her daughter Christine with an old family friend

## The Education Act - one mother's struggle

Doreen Banham's experiences have resulted in a new handbook from PHIG

Doreen Banham is a mum who has made the 1981 Education Act work for her - at a price.

Ever since her daughter, Christine, was born in 1975, Doreen wanted her educated in a mainstream school. But when she was 5, Christine was placed in Ethel Davis Special School in Ilford.

"When the Education Act was introduced in 1983 I thought it was going to be everything I wanted and Chris would be in a normal school in no time," says Doreen, who is Secretary of the Romford-based Parent Handicap Information Group.

Now, after a year and a half of campaigning which took her as far as the Secretary of State for Education, Doreen has a part of what she wanted. Christine, who is quadriplegic, now spends half a day a week at a Junior Mixed Infants School in Romford for a trial period.

Doreen's first-hand knowledge of appeals, assessment and reports forms the basis of a new booklet from PHIG called *The 1981 Education Act: Helpful Advice to Parents on how to*

*make the Act work for you.*

This, she hopes, will provide essential advice for parents who are negotiating with Education Authorities.

"I want to give other parents hope," she says. "I think 3 days a week at a mainstream school would be ideal for Christine, and I'll get there in the end."

"That's what Christine wants too and she's the most important thing. It's easy for people to forget that."

Doreen read the Warnock Report in 1981 and the proposed parent-professional partnership made her realise that she might have some say in her child's future after all.

So in April 1983, only 2 days after the report became law, she wrote to the London Borough of Havering Education Officer asking for reassessment.

He agreed, and Doreen prepared a parent's report, although she found there were no guidelines on how to do so.

The Statement of Special Needs, including reports by Christine's school, a medical officer, an educational psycho-

logist and social services arrived in January 1984.

But the provision stayed the same - full-time special education.

"The statement seemed to represent a totally different child from my own," says Doreen.

Her claim for one day a week at a mainstream school was also turned down at a local appeal in March 1984.

But Doreen did get another chance - which many parents do not - when a second hearing on appeal was granted with the officers of the Secretary of State for Education.

They renegotiated half a day a week at a local mainstream school.

"She absolutely loves it there," says Doreen. "But I can't help feeling they're just accommodating her for the time being."

On 13 February, Havering will review Christine's education and will make a decision on its future.

*The booklet is available, free, from PHIG, 160 Charlbury Crescent, Harold Hill, Romford, Essex.*

## No accounting for some

Only 52 per cent of groups affiliated to The Spastics Society have submitted an annual account for 1984, and at a Regions meeting on 15 January Regional Chairmen were asked to remind their local groups of the need for financial statements.

Some have not submitted accounts for 4 years.

"There has been an improvement over the last 2 years," says Ann Hithersay, Director of Regions, "and we are grateful for that. But there is still a problem."

"The Spastics Society prides itself on publicising its annual accounts in the interests of voluntary organisation accountability to the public," she says. "It is a condition of affiliation to The Society to submit accounts every year."

"Accounts also give us a picture of the financial strength of local groups, together and individually," she says. "They alert us to any problems they may have."

If groups are having problems finding accountants or treasurers, for example, the Regions Division can put them in touch with groups like REACH (The Retired Executives Action Clearing House).

This is a group of retired businessmen who can work on accounts for charities on an expenses-only basis.

There is a wide difference in the percentage of groups which have submitted accounts from region to region - in the Midland Region and South East Region the figure is at present 74 per cent, in London 20 per cent.

David Ingham, Kensington Post



## Big thank-you from Heather-Jane

6-year-old Heather-Jane Thomson took half an hour to circle the Round Pond in Kensington Gardens.

And her efforts raised £270 for the Cheyne Centre for Spastic Children which she has attended for the last year.

"Heather-Jane wanted to say thank-you to Cheyne before she left for all they had done. And the best way was for Heather to do something for them," says Vicky Carr, Heather's Mother.

"She had many difficulties

before she came to Cheyne," she says.

"Now she has fewer convulsions, speaks more easily, is easier to manage and a lot more cheerful in herself."

Heather-Jane, who lives just off the Portobello Road, gained sponsorship from all her stall-owner friends at the market.

The money will be used to buy specialist toys and equipment for the infant classroom at Cheyne.

## Graham's feeling for poetry

Dewsbury Reporter

*Feelings* is the title of a new compilation of poems written by Graham Spendelow, a member of Dewsbury and District Spastics Society. 400 copies have already been sold.

All the proceeds from the booklet, which costs 50p, go to the Dewsbury Group.

The poems cover love, war, home, the countryside and religion. Here is one of them:

### Silence is Near

Silence in the dead of night,  
Silence with an ear of light,  
Noiseless noises you seem to hear,  
When all the time silence is near.

Silence is the deaf man's pain,  
Silence is seeing with a gain,  
He looks and he begins to hear,  
When all the time silence is near.

For copies write to Graham Spendelow, 45 Victoria Street, Ravensthorpe, Dewsbury.



Graham Spendelow and his wife Denise



**Ship shape and Yorkshire fashion.** Commander Nigel Essenhigh (centre) and Lieutenant John Hodder of HMS Ark Royal, inspect the work of Tony Dolan, who is assembling exhaust clamp fittings at the Leeds and District Spastics Society's Industrial Work Centre in Osmondthorpe Lane. They visited on 11 December, and have invited members of the society back to Ark Royal in May or June. Members of the ship are also keen to "adopt" the society, helping with fund-raising, repairs and decorations.

## LOCAL GROUP NEWS



Edited by Simon Crompton

### News Please!

We rely on local groups to send us their news, so please let us know what's going on in your area. We need to know of events before they happen! Only if we receive information at the start of each month can we get it into the next month's issue.



# How to put your foot down – comfortably

Janet Ciddor, occupational therapist of The Spastics Society's Visiting Aids Centre, gives advice

Many people with cerebral palsy have an unusual way of walking. They may walk on the side of a foot, drag the toe along the ground with each step, "toe walk" instead of using heel and toe, or put their feet down heavily.

As a result their shoes get uneven wear. So it is important to buy strong shoes and use anti-scut material to strengthen toes, heels and sides.

Footwear must also support the foot, particularly if it is to bear weight while transferring or walking.

The increased muscle tone of spasticity can pull the foot into abnormal positions which eventually leads to deformity. So the foot must be kept in the correct position – toes flat, foot at 90° to the leg, and ankle in midline. When the ankle is flexed to 90°, the extensor spasticity in the lower limb is broken down and the Achilles tendon is prevented from shortening.

Even people who cannot stand or walk may need supportive shoes to prevent deformity. These days there is a wide choice of orthopaedic shoes and boots for adults and children which support the ankles, have toe straps and open-toe for easy access. Some of them come in bright colours.

## Easy opening

Open-toe footwear is very helpful for people who cannot wriggle their feet into shoes. The foot can be brought straight down from above and put into the right position.

Many ordinary shoes can be adapted to open to the toe and there are also shoes with a zip at the heel. You may find a long-handled shoe horn or a shoe remover useful.

For those who cannot manage conventional shoe laces there are shoes made with velcro fastenings or ones that can be adapted. You can also buy elastic shoelaces which allow the foot to wriggle in and out of a laced-up shoe. There are even one-handed lace fasteners.

## Keep warm

People who sit still for a long time or cannot move their legs and feet risk getting very cold feet. For them I would suggest

extra warm slippers or shoes made from sheepskin or lined with thermal material. For children there are crocheted booties called Toddle-Tots. Some people might like a lamb's wool footmuff.

Tempting as slippers are, they should not be worn often: they don't give enough support for walking and they won't prevent deformity. Furthermore, flat slippers discourage ankle movement when walking which stops the leg muscles from working properly and pumping blood back up the leg. This can cause oedema (swelling).

To prevent oedema, people who sit still should move their legs and feet frequently and also keep their feet elevated for part of the day.

For everyone, shoes that rub are a hazard, so carers should check feet frequently for skin damage.

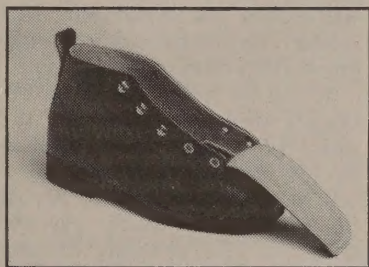
Made-to-measure or specially adapted footwear is available on the NHS. Your GP can refer you to a consultant orthopaedic surgeon. It is also a good idea to get advice from a physiotherapist and/or a chiropodist to ensure that you have the most appropriate shoe.

## Financial help

If you are on Supplementary Benefit, a single payment can be made to assist with buying shoes. There is a special clothing allowance for those who incur higher than normal costs, eg. if one foot is longer than the other. And there is also an allowance to cover excessive wear and tear on clothing or footwear.



Toddle-Tots have wool or cotton uppers and leather soles, come in 4 colours and 3 sizes (heel-toe 10, 12 or 14 cm). £3.95-£4.95, including postage. N P Foreman, 53 Reedman Rd, Long Eaton, Derbys NG10 3SD.



The Cooper-Kids boot is from a range of 4 attractive styles of wide-opening, deep fitting footwear by P R Cooper Ltd.



Ladies' water-repellent ankle boots. Fully Thermolactyl "fur" lined with an easy-access, slanting side zip. Available in brown, sizes 3-8. £17.99. Damart, Bingley, W. Yorkshire BD16 4BH.



Remmedi's Soft Shoes, one fastened with velcro, cost £16.80. Remploy Medical Products Division, Orthotic Research & Design Centre, Russ Street, Bristol.



The Cooper-Kids sandal – like the boot – comes in sizes 1 babies to 5 youths, 6 colours, £29.50-£31.68 plus postage. P R Cooper Ltd, 27 Stoughton Street South, Leicester LE2 0SH.

## Further advice

Clothing Adviser, Disabled Living Foundation, 380/384 Harrow Road, London W9 2HU. Tel: 01-289 6111

Society of Chiropodists, 8 Wimpole Street, London W1M 8BX. Tel: 01-580 3228

British Surgical Trades Association, Centre Point, 103 New Oxford Street, London WC1A, Tel: 01-240 5904, can give names and addresses of local suppliers of orthopaedic footwear.

## References

Janet Hughes, *Footwear and Footcare for Adults*, £5.25; Janet Hughes, *Footwear and Footcare for Disabled Children*, £5.25; M D England, *Footwear for Problem Feet*, £2.50. All available from the Disabled Living Foundation. Cheques and postal orders should be made out to DLF (Sales) Ltd, Brook House, 45 East Hill, Wandsworth, London SW18 2QZ.

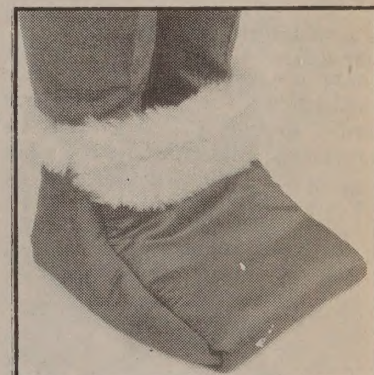
## Addresses

Shoe-Guard anti-scut material from Austenal Dental Products Ltd, 4 Crystal Way, Elm Grove Road, Harrow, Middx HA1 2HG. Tel: 01-863 9044.

Long-handled shoe-horn, shoe remover and No-Bows one-handed lace fastener, from Homecraft, 27 Trinity Road, London SW17 7SS. Tel: 01-672 7070.

Elastic shoelaces from Llewellyn & Company, Carlton Works, Carlton Street, Liverpool L3 7ED. Tel: 051 236 5311.

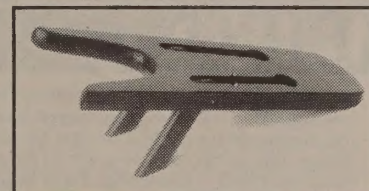
Lace-n-lock shoe fastening aid from Lace-n-lock Co, Downalong, Bushey Heath, Herts WD2 1HZ. Tel: 01-848 7720



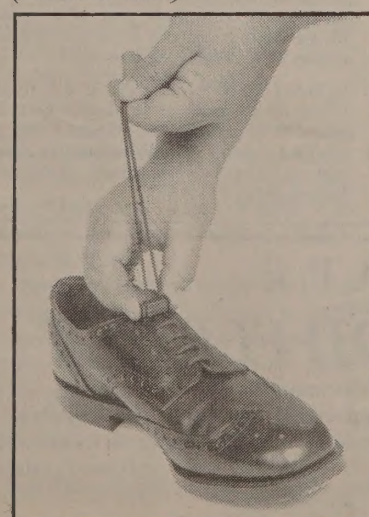
The Lamb-Pad Footmuff keeps feet warm both in and out of doors. £16.55 Dermalux Co Ltd, 146-154 Kilburn High Road, London NW6 4JD.



LSB Comfort Shoes with velcro fastening come in sizes 2-11, in black or tan. The suede shoe (right) comes in sizes 2-8 (beige only). £33.22-£36.71 (plus VAT). Kickabout Booties come in sizes child's 3-adults 5. Light tan, red and black. From £20.33. LSB Commodities, 203-4 Melbott Road, Kings Norton, Birmingham B30 3HU.



This shoe-remover enables you to ease off footwear without bending. £4.00 from Homecraft (see Addresses).



Elastic Shoelaces in black or brown, 18"-24". 43-55p. Homecraft Supplies, (see Addresses).

## OUTDOOR EDUCATION COURSES & ADVENTURE HOLIDAYS FOR PEOPLE WITH SPECIAL NEEDS

Churchtown Farm is a Spastics Society Centre.

THIS WINTER AND SPRING



All levels of ability and degree of handicap catered for in winter and summer. From £68.00 per 7 night week at a purpose built centre offering full central heating, heated pool, excellent food and accommodation. Activities include sailing, riding, rock-climbing, canoeing, swimming, camping, bird watching, natural history, photography, painting, pottery etc.

Brochure available from The Principal, Churchtown Farm Field Studies Centre, Lanlivery, Bodmin, Cornwall.



# Share Your Problems

With Margaret Morgan

## I'd like to be trained in counselling

I would like some information and advice about counselling courses. I am in my early twenties and I have cerebral palsy, though I am quite mobile and I don't have any difficulties with communication. I get on well with most people and I think I am a good listener. Friends often tell me about their problems. I am doing voluntary work at present and I could go on a training course, though who would pay for it is another matter. Can you advise me?

I am sure that you are wise to find out more about counselling.

I suggest that you should attend a short introductory course, which will enable you to experience for yourself what is involved. The tutors will, I am sure, give you guidance about your suitability for this area of skilled personal work and they will also know about training opportunities.

During most introductory courses participants are expected to share their own experiences with the group and the week-ends can cause some deep heart-searching and personal upheavals. This "looking into" yourself and your reactions is very important, however, if you are really going to try and help people to solve their problems.

The National Marriage Guidance Council runs short courses for people with some experience in a professional role, though not necessarily in marriage guidance, and the next dates for their "Introduction to Counselling" courses are: 9-12 April and 28-31 October. The courses are residential and the cost is £104. Details can be obtained from: The Registrar, NMGC, Herbert Gray College, Little Church Street, Rugby CV21 3AP.

You will probably find, however, that the following Workshop Weekend is more suitable for you. It is likely to cost about £60.

This "Introductory Course on Skills for Disabled Counsellors" is especially for people with disabilities and those working in the field. No previous experience or qualifications are needed. The dates are 19-21 April and the venue is the Avon Tyrrell Centre in the New Forest. Details can be obtained from Gill Brearley, 47 Lowther Hill, London SE23 1PZ. I do hope that you will be able to attend this workshop.

If you should have any difficulty in meeting the cost you may like to approach your local group of The Spastics Society or the Personal Services Fund at 16 Fitzroy Square, London W1P 5HQ.

The British Association for Counselling, 37a Sheep Street, Rugby CV21 3BX is also a very useful organisation to contact for information and reading lists.

## We want our son to learn to drink properly

Our son, Matthew, is just five. He is rather severely physically handicapped and he has several problems when it comes to drinking. Although Matthew's head control is improving he is unable to maintain his head in an upright position for any length of time. Consequently his head has to be supported. Once his head is supported and the cup (incidentally we use a doidy cup) is offered to his mouth his anxious desire to drink causes him to arch his back and extend backwards. Naturally the longer he has been without a drink the worse the problem. It is then a matter of relaxing him to stop him extending his back. When he is relaxed he has difficulty in bringing his top lip to the cup. He is also very easily distracted from the job in hand. We would be glad of your advice as we want him to learn to drink properly, rather than having to lay him backwards and tipping the liquid into his mouth.

I know from what other parents say that drinking - and feeding generally - can often be a very



Simon Crompton

real and time-consuming problem, which causes considerable anxiety and frustration to everyone.

I expect you are receiving advice from your local speech and physiotherapists and you will know how important correct positioning is.

Matthew's reaction in arching his back is quite a common one and I am sure that your physio will be able to show you how to hold him to relax him more easily and to prevent the backward extension. It does, however, take considerable time and patience and, as you say, the more thirsty and tense Matthew is, the more difficult it all becomes.

You may find it easier if you support his lower jaw to help him to maintain a fairly closed mouth while he is drinking. This will reduce jaw movement and it might help him to control his top jaw and lip more effectively.

It can be frustrating if he becomes distracted, though the more relaxed the whole situation is, the more likely Matthew will be able to settle to satisfying his thirst more quickly. Parents' anxieties can so easily transfer themselves to their children during meal times and I do appreciate just how difficult it is to be patient and relaxed when everything takes so long and is such a hassle.

Have you read *Feeding can be Fun*?

The Spastics Society also has a leaflet on Feeding, Series for Parents No. 10. Copies of both can be obtained from The Librarian, 12 Park Crescent, London W1N 4EQ. The booklet costs 60p and the leaflet is free.

I would, however, strongly advise you to talk over Matthew's problems with your speech and physiotherapists if you have not already done so. I do hope that Matthew will continue to make good progress and that he will soon master drinking from his special cup.

# What's On

## Courses at Castle Priory

**Teaching the Child with Cerebral Palsy to Use the Hands** is a multidisciplinary course for teachers, therapists and care staff. It is a repeat of the course led by Ester Cotton in 1983. 1-3 March. Tuition £38, residence £39.

**What is Normalisation?** looks at the role of service provision in relation to people with special needs. 4-5 March. Tuition £36, residence £22.

**Counselling Adolescents with a Visual Handicap** is a course for experienced teachers, careers officers and social workers. It is run in association with the RNIB. 8-10 March. Tuition £38, residence £36.

**The Residential Care of Adults with a Mental Disability** is designed to inform direct care staff of recent developments in this field. Suitable for those working in hostels, hospitals, group homes and Core and Cluster units. 11-20 March. Tuition £100, residence £100.

**Signed English - an introductory, practical course** will use signs from British Sign Language with fingerspelling, generated signs and grammatical markers. The emphasis will be on the acquisition of signs for function words and markers. Students should have a basic knowledge of British Sign Language. 13-15 March. Tuition £40, residence £40.

**School and Health - The Whole Child** provides a chance for school nurses to meet teachers, counsellors and social workers who are involved with mainstream or special school pupils with special needs. 13-15 March. Tuition £38, residence £36.

For more information about any of these courses write to Castle Priory College, Thames Street, Wallingford, Oxon OX10 0HE. Tel: 0491 37551.

## Conferences and Leisure

**SPOD** (Sexual and Personal Relationships of the Disabled) courses and workshops in February and March are: Sexuality and Physical Disability, 12-13 February: Workshop on sexual and physical disability for women in residential care, 14 February; Sexuality and Mental Handicap, 26-27 February; Workshop for disabled people on sexuality and disability, 5 March; Workshop for couples where one or both has physical disability, 12 March; Workshop on the handicapped family, 23 March; Sex Education for Physically Disabled Young People, 26 March. Contact Barbara Feinberg, SPOD, 286 Camden Road, London N7 0BJ. Tel: 01-607 8851/2

**Producing Potted Plants** is a series of regional study days organised by Horticultural Therapy, designed for staff involved in gardening activities with disabled people. 12 February, Hertfordshire College of Agriculture and Horticulture; 27 February, Welsh College of Horticulture; 13 March, Gardening Advice Centre, Glasgow; 27 March, Lincolnshire College of Agriculture and Horticulture. Contact Malcolm Weare, HT, Goulds Ground, Vallis Way, Frome, Somerset. Tel: (0373) 64782

**Technology for Mentally and Multiple Disabled Children** is a practical day course at Langside School, Poole, on 7 March. Designed primarily for people working with mentally disabled children, it will also be useful to those working with physically disabled children. Contact Kathleen Vandervelde, Head Teacher, Langside School, Langside Avenue, Parkstone, Poole, Dorset. Tel: 0202 518635

**Microelectronic Aids and Children with Special Needs** is a day course at Lord Mayor Treloar College, near Alton, Hampshire on 9 March. It covers a range of technical aids, equipment and techniques. There will be talks, discussions an opportunity to try equipment and an exhibition of aids. Fees: professionals £8, voluntary workers, students, disabled people and their relatives £7, ACTIVE members £6, families £9. Contact Donna Irwin, Occupational Therapist, Lord Mayor Treloar College, Lower School, Froyle, Alton, Hants. GU34 4LA. Tel: (0420) 83508

**Coping with Handicap** is a course for those working with physically handicapped elderly people. It examines the physical and emotional effect of handicap and explores ways of giving the client independence. It is at Seebohm House, Birmingham on 14-15 March. Contact Training Department, Age Concern England, 60 Pitcairn Road, Mitcham, Surrey CR4 3LL. Tel: 01-640 5431

**Disability - Whose Responsibility?** is for medical and paramedical professionals to examine ways in which the flow of information to disabled people and their families could be improved. It is at the King's Fund Centre on 14 March. Contact Ann Darnborough, King's Fund Centre, 126 Albert Street, London NW1 7NF. Tel: 01-267 6111

**The role of Technological and Systems Development** in the improving transport availability for people with disabilities is a Spastics Society Distech conference to be held at Owens Park, Manchester on 25-26 March. Bursaries are available for unemployed people with disabilities. For details and costs contact Nigel Smith at Park Crescent. Tel: 01-636 5020 ext 235.

**Provision of Aids and Adaptations for Hospital Patients Discharged into their Own Home** is a study day at the King's Fund Centre on 28 March. Run by Ursula Keeble, it is based on her study of patients discharged from 3 London hospitals and looks at the role of staff from hospitals, social services, housing and other services. Fee £14. Contact (before 1 March) Melanie Kornitzer, King's Fund Centre, 126 Albert Street, London NW1 7NF. Tel: 01-267 6111

**The Child with a Disability, his Family and his school** is an international seminar organised by the International Cerebral Palsy Society to be held at Sidney Sussex College, Cambridge on 31 March-4 April. 17 experts from around the world will discuss the role of both education and the family in the life of the child. The meeting will be of interest to teachers, psychologists, therapists, parents, doctors and administrators. Total cost £145 (ICPS members £130). Contact Anita Loring, ICPS, 5a Netherhall Gardens, London NW3 5RN. Tel: 01-794 9761

## CLASSIFIED

### Jobs

**SITUATIONS VACANT.** One disabled person living in the Birmingham/Midlands area and one disabled person living in the London area wanted to take telephone messages in his/her own home on behalf of a company involved in the motor trade. Must have good telephone manner and preferably a knowledge and interest in motor cars. Hours and wages to be arranged. Please write to Box No. 116. *Disability Now*, address on page 16.

### For sale

**STANNAH STAIRLIFT.** Left-hand curve. Details 01-643 5624.

### Personal

**YOUNG FEMALE PENFRIEND** WANTED for a rather "fed up" 38 year-

old male living on his own. Interests are photography, radio, meeting people and the simple things in life. Likes the *Moody Blues* type music. Please write to Brian Barwick, Flat 9, 2 Laisteridge Lane, Bradford BD7 1RD.

**ENGLISH-SPEAKING FEMALE PENFRIEND LIVING OVERSEAS WANTED** for a 40 year-old woman interested in letter writing, travel and collecting dolls in national costumes and view-cards. Please write to Sally Woodward, 152 Salterton Road, Exmouth, Devon.

**FEMALE PENFRIEND**, preferably living in the Birmingham area, wanted for a 21 year-old man with cp. Please write to Clifford Adams, Midlands Spastics Association, 13a Victoria Road, Harborne, Birmingham B17 0AQ.

## SHAPE presents ACTING DIFFERENT

a practical short course.

An opportunity for people with drama training to acquire basic skills in workshop techniques suitable for use in day centres, hospitals, homes, etc; plus placements.

Course starts in May 1985, and will be held in a London venue with full access for people with disabilities.

sae for further information and application form (form to be returned by March 4th) to:

SHAPE, 9 FITZROY SQUARE, LONDON W1P 6AE

### Annie comes to Bristol

*Annie's Coming Out* will be showing at the Gaiety Cinema, Wells Road, Knowle, Bristol 24-27 February. Performances start at 7.30 pm. Tickets cost £2; 25p of which will be donated to The Spastics Society. Wheelchair access possible, with assistance! Contact John Roberts, Tel: 0272 276689.

If you'd like *Disability Now* regularly, please contact the Circulation Supervisor, *Disability Now*, 12 Park Crescent, London W1N 4EQ.

### ASHLEY MOBILITY HAND CONTROL CAR CONVERSION SPECIALISTS

DHSS Approved Hand Control Contractors. Also Approved by Austin-Rover, Ford, Vauxhall, etc., and on 'Motability' List.

Kits supplied for all popular automatic models for fitting by Main Dealers.

Advice and Assessments. Demonstration Metro available.

Send for Kit Price List and Brochure to:

ASHLEY MOBILITY, FREEPOST, BIRMINGHAM, B25 8HY. Tel: 021-772 5364.





Lance Topham and shops manageresses at the SOS Raffle Draw. Back row (left to right): Shirley Lyall, Mary Bayliss, Lance Topham, Lyn Middleton, Hilary Mann, Dorothy Campbell. Front row: Janet Peel, Jeanette Parker, Pat MacCrimmon.

## PEOPLE

**Lance Topham** retired as administration manager of the Shops Department of The Spastics Society on 31 December. But he will continue to edit *Talking Shop*, the Department's house magazine.

In his 9½ years with The Spastics Society he has also been assistant to the head of marketing,

and merchandising manager.

"In that time the Shops Department has gone from strength to strength, and there has been a steady increase in profits," he says.

"I'm not responsible, but I'm very glad to have been in a Department which is expanding all the time and to have had a hand in that expansion. They've been a great crowd of people to work with."

## Love, sex – and exploitation?

*Continued from page 5*

Her quarrel is not with segregated clubs *per se* but with the way the Outsiders Club is run, and she doesn't think it has changed in the last three years.

"I object to the exploitation of women in the club and the total devaluing of relationships," she said. "I don't want to see disabled people used."

There are three main accusations in the *Spare Rib* article.

First, that little interest is shown in the women members of the club and that they are not given enough protection. When they have asked to be taken off the confidential list, their letters have been ignored "because to have done so would have rendered the list ridiculous", and they have been written off as prudes and neurotics. By contrast distressed male members received a lot of attention or were excused because of their disability.

Anne Rae also said that Tuppy Owens was a publisher of pornography and that most members were not aware that she subsidised the club from this source.

Third, she quoted from an article in *Disability Challenge*, the occasional journal of the Union of the Physically Impaired Against Segregation, which called a book by Tuppy Owens, *Take Me, I'm Yours, A Guide to Feminine Psychology* (1980), "a manual for rape" and deplored the fact that she was achieving credibility and respect from established organisations.

On the charge of exploiting women members, Tuppy Owens does not see how this could be done since the women join the club on a voluntary basis.

"We spend much more time ringing the women up to make sure they are ok and always get their letters answered quickly and their applications off quickly because we want to have them in the club," she said.

"I don't think there's any exploitation and none of the sort, 'she's new and vulnerable, go round and f— her.' The last thing we want is for a girl to complain

that she's having rude phone calls. We know which girls in the club want to have affairs so we put them in touch with men who similarly want to have affairs. None of the girls has every complained."

Tuppy Owens thinks that the phone calls are not as bad as people make out nor do they happen often, but she agrees that even one phone call is enough to frighten off a woman member. That is why there is a warning on the membership form and why two helpers (who are not professionals) now cope with distress calls from men or women.

She also admits that a name cannot be removed from the confidential list until the next up-dating, but she is confident that with the new word processor the list will be kept up to date more efficiently.

The other allegations are easier to check. In 1974, in the American "girlie" magazine, *Ouil*, Tuppy was quoted as saying "I probably shouldn't say I'm a pornographer, but I am. I'm an evangelist, in a way."

She's been involved in sexual photography; she edits the *Sex Maniac's Diary*, which sells 70,000 copies a year; she has written several books and even, it is said, developed a line in sex cosmetics.

*Take Me, I'm Yours* is on the Outsiders Club library list and is one of the books which has been taped for blind members.

"Pornography" has no easy, objective definition. Many people indulge in pornography, and if someone's sexual needs cannot be satisfied in any other way, who are we to say "no"?

But *Take Me, I'm Yours* seems to be on a different level.

To Tuppy Owens it is a humorous and practical book. It is written for men who seldom have "success" with women and it is about getting girls into bed to have "such fun (and so will all the lucky girls)".

To me it seems a dangerous book, especially if it got into the hands of men who lack experience of women or who have emotional problems, for it gives the impression that women are sexual creatures controlled more by earlier conditioning

## ANNOUNCEMENTS

**Fact sheets on VAT and employment.** The Lobbying Department at The Spastics Society has produced factsheets on VAT Adaptations/Extensions, Employment Aids and Adaptations for Disabled People, Assistance with Fares to Work, Job Introduction Scheme, Personal Reader Scheme, Job Rehearsal Scheme, REMAP. Available from Sharron Saint Michael, The Spastics Society, 12 Park Crescent, London W1N 4EQ. Tel: 01-636 5020 ext. 258.

**The Child Poverty Action Group** has published new editions of its 2 guides to social security benefits, *The National Welfare Benefits Handbook*, covering the field of means tested benefits, and *The Rights Guide to Non Means Tested Social Security Benefits*. Both cost £3.50 from Moira Turnbull, CPAG, 1 Macklin Street, London WC2B 5NH. Tel: 01-242 3225.

**Applications are welcome** for the Second Institution of Electrical Engineers Prize for Helping Disabled People. The prize of £5,000 will be awarded for the best application of electronic or electrical techniques for improving the quality of life of disabled people and furthering their integration in society. For more information contact Christina Dagnall, IEE, Savoy Place, London WC2R 0BL. Tel: 01-240 1871.

**London Media Workshops** are running 20 workshops on writing for television, radio and

magazines during 1985 – in February, March, July, August and September. To mark IYY, they are offering 2 £25 bursaries to writers under 25 and there is also a 10 per cent discount to people connected with charities for young or disabled people. The full fee is £30 a day plus £4.50 VAT. All workshops will be held in Dolphin Square, Victoria, London SW1. Contact Jean Angel, London Media Workshops, 101 King's Drive, Gravesend, Kent DA12 5BQ. Tel: (0474) 64676.

**Cardiff Shopmobility** is a new scheme to provide electric and manual wheelchairs and scooters for disabled people to shop and use other facilities in Cardiff City Centre. There is no charge but a returnable deposit of £2.50 is required. For booking and information contact The Co-ordinator, Cardiff Shopmobility Centre, Oxford Arcade Multi-Storey Car Park, Bridge Street, Cardiff CF1 2DT. Tel: 0222 399355.

**Electric wheelchair insurance scheme.** A new policy offered by R F Nicholls includes fully comprehensive cover of the chair and third party legal liability. It covers expenses incurred in getting home if the chair should break down. The Extra Care Chair Plan annual premium is £125, including labour parts and maintenance. Further details from R F Nicholls Ltd, Soothouse Spring, Valley Road Industrial Estate, St Albans, Herts. Tel: (56) 34255.

Yet Liz Blewett, a disabled helper and a member of SPOD's Council, who knows about Tuppy's publications says, "It doesn't detract from founding the Outsiders. It was formed for the very best of motives, to give a better quality of life to handicapped people, and I firmly believe that this is one of the best things that has happened to disabled people in a long time."

There seems to be three ways that the club could go. Either it could carry on as it is, hand-to-mouth, suspect in the eyes of "the establishment", but fulfilling need.

Or, a suggestion made by Margaret Morgan, chairman of SPOD, that perhaps it should concentrate on the confidential members' list and leave the so-

**The British Library of Tape Recordings for Hospital Patients** and the National Listening Library now occupy the same building at 12 Lant Street, London SE1 1QR. Tel: 01-407 9417/8. A new computer will combine their records and make it easier to pinpoint different needs.

## Holidays

**Holidays for Disabled People** is the title of RADAR's new 656-page guide to resorts with facilities for disabled people in Britain and 38 other countries. Priced £2, it is available from W H Smith & Son or post-free from RADAR, 25 Mortimer Street, London W1N 4AB. Tel: 01-637 5400.

**John Grooms holidays** have produced their 1985 brochure, offering holidays for disabled people, their families and friends at hotels, caravans and self-catering units throughout England and Wales. They have now introduced "Break Facilities" with personal care in Southend and London. Contact John Grooms Holidays, 10 Gloucester Drive, London N4 2LP. Tel: 01-802 7272.

**Wales: A Guide for the Disabled Visitor** lists hotels and self-catering holiday accommodation suitable for disabled people in all parts of Wales, and gives information on tourist attractions, public conveniences and service stations. Published by the Wales Tourist Board in conjunction with the Wales Council for the Disabled, it costs £1 (including postage and packing) and is available from Tourist Information Centres.

cial side to someone else. (But who?)

Or, and this is my preference, "the establishment" should acknowledge the work of the club more openly, join the advisory panel, become trustees.

By broadening the responsibility for the club and making Tuppy Owens and her helpers more accountable to professionals who have the power of referral, the club would become less vulnerable to criticism, would increase its membership and might attract funding for, say, a headquarters.

But would Tuppy Owens accept that?

*The Outsiders Club, Box 4ZB, London W1A 4ZB. Tel: 01-741 3332.*

## An invitation to

**SOUND VISION ACTION**

**Are you aged between 16 and 25 (able-bodied or disabled)?**

**Are you interested in communication through the Arts?**

**Do you enjoy working with other young people?**

**If so apply now** for a place on this exciting new international project at Beaumont College, Lancaster. Running from April 22nd-26th it will consist of a week of workshops, using a wide range of creative media – including dance, drama, music, photography, creative writing, lighting, sound, ceramics and other visual artforms.

Applications (by March 1st) to: Mary Jones, Beaumont College, Slyn Road, Lancaster. Telephone: 0524-64278

**Be there or be**



## Demand your rights says Lord Snowdon

Philip Hyde

Lord Snowdon has condemned the "thoughtless planners and unfeeling bureaucracies" which impede young people with disabilities from continuing their education.

"I hope you, the younger generation, will help fight for and demand, and I mean demand, equal opportunities and rights for disabled people so that they may go where they want, when they want - not as an exception but as of right..." he said.

Lord Snowdon was speaking at the presentation of the Snowdon Awards on 17 January. This year, £14,000 worth of bursaries were given away to 18 disabled students to enable them to take courses in further education or training.

Lord Snowdon cited Euston Station as an example of lack of concern for disabled people, and asked why the DHSS does not supply an outdoor, self-propelled motorised chair.

"Why should students have to beg, borrow or rely on charity for funds to finance essential mobility?" he said.

The mobility allowance was well-meaning, but hardly realistic, he added.

This is the fourth year of the Snowdon Awards. The trust fund



Lord Snowdon talks to some winners. Back row: Guy Perring, Jacqueline Parkes, Fiona Hatfield. Front: Melanie Gardner, Lord Snowdon, Colin Low and Ruth Whapples.

was set up by Lord Snowdon, and the awards are administered by Action Research.

A special, non-financial, award was made to Colin Low for outstanding work for the benefit of disabled people.

A blind campaigner for integration, full participation and anti-discrimination for many years, he has been a member of

the working party on Integrating the Disabled which Lord Snowdon chaired, and a member of the Committee on Restrictions against Disabled People. He has also been President of the National Federation of the Blind.

Now he is to head the GLC Disability Resource Team, which will be launched later this month.

## BT introduces accessible phone booths



Joyce Boyle of Leamington tries out the new BT phone booth.

"British Telecom has the needs of disabled people at heart."

That was the message which Merle Davies, The Spastics Society's holiday advisor, brought back from the launch of British Telecom's £160 million modernisation programme for public payphones.

Over the next 10 years £35 million will be spent on new booths specially designed for disabled people and made accessible to wheelchairs.

The old red kiosks are outdated and unpopular, BT admits. "They are expensive and difficult to clean and maintain and cannot be used by handicapped people," said Nick Kane, director of marketing for BT's local communications service.

The new booths will come in a variety of designs, some with wider doors, most with no doors, and all flush to the

ground.

Made of aluminium and stainless steel, they will be vandal-resistant, with reinforced glass panelling, much brighter lighting and armour-plated push-button keypads and coin boxes.

Merle Davies, who uses a wheelchair, tried out the new phone booth.

"The press button dial is at a comfortable height," she said. "The slot machine takes any coin from 2p to £1, which is convenient, and the coins slip in easily so that people with poor hand function should be able to manage. My only concern is that people who cannot stretch their arms out may have difficulty reaching the slot."

She suggests that since unused coins are returned at the end of the call, by pressing a button, it might be best to use several different coins.

"The telephone directories are set at a comfortable reading height," she added. "And blind subscribers will be pleased to know that British Telecom is aware of their difficulties and will retain operator services."

## Disability Now

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## More cuts - even pocket money?

Proposed cuts in board and lodging payments should not be at the expense of elderly and disabled people.

This was the message contained in a letter from John Cox to the Social Security Advisory Committee to the DHSS in December.

The Committee is now considering proposals for amending the Supplementary Benefit regulations put forward by Norman Fowler, Social Services Secretary.

While the Society agrees that board and lodging charges have shot up in the last 2 years, it believes that the Government must distinguish between respectable voluntary organisations providing residential care and less reputable landlords.

It is particularly concerned that in ironing out existing anomalies in the system of payments, the Government will effectively cut the income of elderly and disabled people living in residential homes run by private landlords or voluntary organisations.

This would happen, for example, if the Attendance Allowance was always taken into account when assessing claims for Supplementary Benefit, and if a new median rate was introduced for personal allowances (pocket money).

"Many of these payments are of direct benefit to disabled people in allowing them to live fuller lives in the community," said John Cox.

While the Society is glad that the Government now recognises the high cost of residential care for severely handicapped people, it does not think the proposed limit set for this category is high enough and it would like to see another, higher, category for severely and multiple-handicapped people.

It is also concerned that if the price of local residential accommodation exceeds the limits set by the DHSS, a disabled person might turn in vain for "topping up" to a local authority and not be able to live in the home he chooses or needs.

## Red light for orange badge abuse

by Simon Crompton

The London Boroughs Association is encouraging a clamp-down on people who abuse the orange badge parking scheme for disabled people.

The Association, composed of representatives from all 32 London Borough Councils and the Corporation of the City of London, announced last month that it wants to see more prosecutions against able-bodied people who park on yellow lines and free on parking meters when they are not transporting disabled people.

It is asking each borough to raise the subject with its police liaison committee.

"The abusers are bringing the scheme into disrepute," says Roger Davies, social services committee secretary of the LBA. "Genuinely disabled people might face resentment unfairly."

"We've found out from the Department of Transport that, as far as they know, there have only been 2 prosecutions for this offence," he says. "So we believe that enforcement may be the problem."

In March 1983, misuse of the scheme was made a separate offence, which meant it should be easier to enforce.

But the Metropolitan Police has not made one successful prosecution for the wrongful use of a permit.

The problem, several sources say, is that to spot able-bodied people jumping out of cars would involve very labour-intensive policing.

Abusers are usually only identified when they have committed some other parking offence. Since these are fixed penalty offences, whose terms of notice exempt offenders from further prosecution providing they pay the penalty, abusers of badges often get away scot-free.

The orange badge entitles holders in England and Wales to park without charge or limit at parking meters, to park without time limit in streets with limited waiting periods, and for a maximum of 2 hours in areas with yellow lines.

But not all London Boroughs recognise orange badges. Because of their particular traffic

## DISABLED



problems, the Cities of London and Westminster, the Royal Borough of Kensington and Chelsea and part of the London Borough of Camden have their own, more limited, parking permit scheme for disabled people.

The City of London permit entitles disabled people living permanently in the City of London or working there to use parking meters and council car parks free of charge.

But Stewart Yesner, a paraplegic lawyer, and a holder of both an orange badge and a City permit, found he was often forced to park on yellow lines just to reach his job. For this he collected 3 parking tickets and was fined £85. He lost an appeal at the Old Bailey in December.

"The basis of my appeal was over and above the disabled parking issue," he says. "It was to do with disability and work."

"The Sick and Disabled Persons Act makes it mandatory for public buildings to be accessible for disabled people and a lot of money has been spent on this in London. But the Catch 22 situation is that unless the disabled person arrives by taxi, he or she can't get to them. There's something wrong here somewhere."

Len Hicks, traffic officer for the City of London says: "With all the goodwill in the world, there's a limit to what we can do. We put parking meters everywhere it is possible - we have 1,535, and that is the maximum."

Stewart Yesner, who founded the International Spinal Research Trust, has found that police and magistrates in different boroughs show varying degrees of leniency to disabled parkers, and believes this could be distressing.

"It would be idealistic to have the orange badge recognised throughout London because visitors from all over the country would come in and block the streets," he says. "But people living or working within London should have special concessions. Maybe there should be a grading system and the permits should include pictures of the users."

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